HOUSE Speaker Jose de Venecia files his candidacy for Pangasinan's 4th district at the Comelec in Dagupan City. Behind him are wife Gina and ex-Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. who is running for Dagupan City mayor.
INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

ACROSS / A15

Probers smell overprice: Surveillance cameras at P2M each for Asean summit

SAT. SPECIAL / G1

Ratings rising for Katie Couric on 'CBS News,' Meredith Viera on 'Today'

SAT. SPECIAL / I1

Sharon Cuneta: I love too much, laugh too loudly, cry too easily

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Saturday, March 31, 2007 ★★ 11 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 113 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Workers to enjoy 5-day respite this Holy Week

THE COUNTRY'S WORKERS WILL ENJOY A five-day respite this Holy Week, one of the longest official breaks this year, since President Macapagal-Arroyo announced in 2001 that she would apply "holiday economics" in the Philippines.

Through Proclamation 1211 signed in January, Malacañang declared April 7 (Black Saturday), which is sandwiched between Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and

WORKERS/ A17

Mayor defies suspension

Mandaue City Hall barricaded

By Jolene R. Bulambot and Jhunnex Napallacan
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—TENSIONS ROSE in Mandaue City yesterday as Mayor Thadeo Ouano showed signs of wanting to defy the six-month preventive suspension imposed on him by the Office of the Ombudsman over his suspected involvement in the alleged overpricing of the P365-million street-lighting project for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit last January.

Some 2,000 Ouano supporters, who had been gathering in front of the Mandaue City Hall since the evening of Thursday, yesterday vowed to prevent any officials from the Ombudsman or from the Department of Interior and Local Governments from implementing the order.

Traffic around City Hall was snarled after heavy equipment from the city, including dump trucks, a bulldozer, multicabs and

MAYOR/ A8

THE YOUNG AND THE RESTLESS
Nursery students of the Sadsadan Nanum Daycare Center can't sit still long enough for a souvenir photo after their graduation rites at the Mt. Data Hotel in Sadsadan, Bauko, Mountain Province.
EDWIN BACASMAS

Paris-based rights group also hits RP for slays

By Volt Contreras

ANOTHER GLOBAL ORGANIZATION HAS trained the spotlight on the Philippines over the political killings only days after a United Nations special rapporteur assailed the Arroyo administration and the military for the unsolved murders.

The Paris-based International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) chose the Philippines as the venue for the Asian launch of its 2006 Annual Report mainly because it has "climbed the fastest in the ladder of rights violations" in the continent, according to the group's representative sent to Manila.

PARIS-BASED/ A10

Puno defers relief of Manila cop chief

By Alcuin Papa

A DAY AFTER HE BLEW HIS TOP OVER lapses in the police handling of the Manila hostage crisis, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno has had an apparent change of heart.

Puno yesterday granted the request of Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon to defer the relief of Manila Police District chief Senior Supt. Danilo Abarzosa.

Calderon had asked Puno to hold Abarzosa's relief to give the MPD chief "more time to explain himself." Abarzosa was given up to Sunday to explain.

But Interior Assistant Secretary Brian Yamsuan said the administrative relief of Station 5 commander Supt. Rogelio Rosales and Lawton precinct commander Chief Insp. Bernardo Cubacub would stay.

"We want to make it clear that the re-

PUNO DEFERS/ A10

Rare breast cancer survivor is Baguio ex-cop

By Elmer Kristian Dauigoy
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—MEN CAN GET BREAST cancer, too.

Research shows that 99 percent of the time, women are affected with breast cancer and the remaining 1 percent are men.

"I am one of those in the 1 percent," said 59-year-old Romeo Licyayo, a retired senior superintendent (colonel in the military) of the Philippine National Police.

Family members were shocked that

RARE BREAST/ A8

REM ZAMORA

FOR THE DEFENSE: Rep. Satur Ocampo (2nd from right) gets support from House colleagues and sympathizers at the Supreme Court during oral arguments on Ocampo's petition to nullify his arrest warrant. From left standing, Liza Maza, Frank Chavez, Joel Virador, Joker Arroyo and Rafael Mariano; (seated) lawyers Amylyn Sato, Rachel Pastores and Romeo Capulong.

Romulo: Alston report without body of evidence

By Cynthia D. Balana

FOREIGN SECRETARY ALBERTO ROmulo yesterday said United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston's "unsubstantiated" findings on the Arroyo administration's handling of the political killings would not affect the Philippines' standing in the UN Human Rights Council.

Romulo said at a press conference that he was not surprised by Alston's remarks before the council in Geneva on

ROMULO/ A10

'Grossly surprising:' Why did it take 20 years?

By Leila B. Salaverria and Jerome Aning

SUPREME COURT ASSOCIATE JUSTICE Angelina Sandoval-Gutierrez yesterday expressed surprise why it took 20 years for government witnesses to come out and link detained Rep. Satur Ocampo to the alleged executions by communist rebels of suspected military spies.

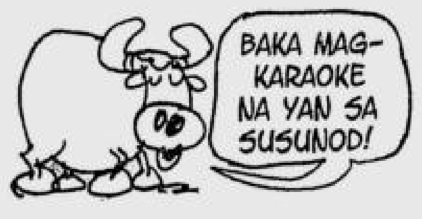
In a hearing on Ocampo's motion challenging his arrest, Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera also admitted on questioning by several justices that the criminal information filed against Ocampo was defective.

Devanadera said, however, that the various errors could still be rectified by filing an amendment to the complaint.

The Supreme Court is expected to come out with its decision on Tuesday on whether or not the Bayan Muna lawmaker should be temporarily released.

At the end of more than five hours of arguments, Ocampo's motion for temporary release was deemed submitted

GROSSLY/ A10


BAKA MAG-KARAOKE NA YAN SA SUSUNOD!

AFP drowns out protest rally with 'La Bamba'

By Christine O. Avendano

HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH ANGRY protestors?

Play "La Bamba" and turn up the volume.

This is the military's new way of dealing with noisy ralliers at the gates of Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City. They play loud music to drown

AFP DROWNS/ A17

Campaign for 18,000 local posts off with a twist

THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR NEARLY 18,000 local posts nationwide got off to a roaring start yesterday, with scions of political families, upstarts, tried-and-tested types and movie icons batting for the votes of 45.5 million Filipinos on May 14.

In a bizarre twist, Naga City Mayor Jesse Robredo, recipient of the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service in 2000, is running for reelection, and his wife Leny, a lawyer, is also seeking the same post.

He is a candidate of the Liberal Party (Roxas/Drilon Wing), and she, of the Aksyon Demokratiko. They are running against Jojo Villafuerte of the powerful political clan in Camarines Sur.

Mayor Robredo told the INQUIRER that the move was a strategy to ensure that the people's choice would win over that of the Commission on Elections.

He said it was also on the advice of his lawyers that he and his wife decided to field her in the race, in view of a petition for his disqualification filed at the Comelec office in Manila.

The petition questioning his Filipino citizenship is the fourth, said the mayor, whose parents are of pure Chinese descent. The previous petitions were lodged in 1992, 2001 and 2004.

CAMPAIGN/ A11

Second FrontPage

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EZ2 6 19 | **FOUR DIGIT** 6 8 6 0

Mid-Day **SUERTRES** Evening
3 8 0 | 7 7 6
(All in exact order)

MEGALOTTO 6/45
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY: KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/03/30/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Angara presses support for agri, health, education

By Alexander Villafania,
Inquirer.net

ELEKSYON 2007

REELECTIONIST SEN. EDGARDO ANGARA, who is running under the administration's Team Unity ticket, said he wants to pursue work on agriculture, health and education.

In a podcast interview with Inquirer.net editors and reporters, Angara said these three sectors still need a significant amount of support from the government in order to address the needs of the population.

Angara said the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) has yet to cover children of indigent Filipino families. His goal is to make health insurance coverage for these children mandatory and free.

He noted that the mortality rate of children between one to five years old in the country is pegged at 440 deaths a year. "This is among the highest in Asia. We need to protect these children because they will be the future citizens of the country."

Angara authored several health related-laws, one of them the national health insurance program which led to the creation of Philhealth.

He also wants to pursue the modernization of the agricultural sector through the use of new technology and additional government financing, noting that the Philippines has one of the highest food costs in Asia.

Food, he pointed out, takes up half of the cost of living of Filipinos. If agricultural production is increased by half, the cost of food would drop by as much, he said.

Angara, who once headed the agriculture department, authored the Agriculture and Fisheries Modernization Act.

However, the lawmaker is most known for his work in education, having served as president of the University of the Philippines and crafted the laws creating the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (Tesda) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd).

Angara's most ambitious plan is to allocate P10 billion solely to improve the country's math, science and technology and engineering courses, which he points out are the basic tools for students' skills development.

He lamented that many high school and college students are "functionally illiterate" in these subjects, a fact he blamed on the hiring of teachers who are not majors in these fields.

"Fifty percent of Math and Science teachers are non-majors. In Physics, it's 75 percent," Angara said.

In particular, Angara cited the Philippines' abysmal performance in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) which ranked the country among the lowest of 45 countries evaluated.

"Our weak point is science and mathematics...This is embarrassing bit of news to us," Angara said.

Among his other plans for education is to expand the student financial system with scholarships, grants and loans.

He also intends to have more teachers trained on science, mathematics and engineering.

COMPETITIVENESS SURVEY

Higher wages pull Manila, Cebu down

By Ronnel W. Domingo

RELATIVELY HIGHER WAGE INCREASES IN MANILA and Cebu, caused by a stronger peso, is pulling down the two cities' competitiveness against other Asian cities and regions where Japanese firms operate.

The two cities were also losing advantage due to higher costs of landline and cellular phone services, as well as corporate income tax.

These were the findings of the 17th Survey of Investment-related Cost Comparison in Major Cities and Regions in Asia conducted recently by the Japan External Trade Organization.

In a briefing yesterday, Jetro Manila's director for research Hiroshi Yoneyama said the appreciation of the peso had put upward pressure on non-agricultural wages, which rose 9.9 percent in Manila and 7.2 percent in Cebu in 2006.

The survey, which covered 28 cities and regions in Asia, was conducted in November 2006.

The other locations were Seoul, South Korea; Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian, Shenyang, Quingdao, Senzhen in China; Hong Kong; Taipei, Taiwan; Singapore; Bangkok, Thailand; Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia; Jakarta and Batam in Indonesia; Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh in Vietnam; Yangon, Myanmar; Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Vientiane, Laos; New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore in India; Karachi, Pakistan; Colombo, Sri Lanka ;and Dhaka, Bangladesh.

These cities were benchmarked against the Japanese cities of Okinawa and Yokohama using the following indicators that were compared in terms of US dollars: wages, social security, office rent, housing rent for foreigners, telecommunications expenses, shipping costs, fuel prices and corporate income tax.

Jetro data showed that only the five Chinese cities of Beijing, Shanghai, Dalian, Quiangdao were worse than Manila in terms of nominal wage hikes.

Imelda: Sorry, but I choose not to run

By Allison W. Lopez

MUCH TO THE DISAPPOINTMENT of the crowd and the media, only a signed statement from former First Lady Imelda Marcos saying she would not run for mayor of Manila was all that they got 30 minutes before the lapse of the March 29 midnight Commission on Elections deadline for the filing of certificates of candidacy.

The statement, which was read by Ding Diaz, the spokesperson of the wife of the late strongman President Ferdinand Marcos at the Manila office of the Comelec on Arroceros Street, said that though Marcos was "truly honored and grateful for the endorsement of the hundreds of thousands of signatures to be mayor of Manila," she did not have to be elected for mayor.

The crowd had gathered after reports circulated that Marcos was getting ready to file her candidacy for mayor. Comelec officials had confirmed that a member of Marcos' staff picked up the necessary form around 7 p.m.

Hours passed, but only Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL) candidates for councilor appeared at the office, among them Roberto Reyes, more popularly known as "Amay Bisaya." The KBL has for years been associated with the Marcoses.

KBL's Remedios Oyales, who was supposed to run for councilor, withdrew the certificate she had already filed and replaced it with a new one—an application to run for mayor—when KBL members learned that Marcos was not coming.

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Rejoinder for Miriam: Brains isn't everything

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SOME SENATORIAL CANDIDATES SAID they agree with Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago that having smarts from a college education should be a key factor in choosing a candidate, but it should not be the only one.

They were reacting to a list that Santiago released the other day which ranked the desirability of the candidates according to their educational qualifications.

Santiago complained that the current crop of senatorial aspirants was singularly lacking in "intellectual giants," her criteria being the number of years they spent at university, possession of a bachelor's degree from the University of the Philippines and a post-graduate degree from abroad.

"She might be right but not all things important in life are learned in school. Check the records, there are very good exceptions," said Vicente Sotto III, a candidate in the administration's Team Unity.

Sotto was one of those listed by Santiago as having had a mere four years of tertiary education and not from the UP.

No absolute gauge for competence

"Credentials in formal education may help gauge the candidate's skills and competence but it is not absolute. Great leaders of humanity and this nation were not necessarily educated in graduate schools," said another Team Unity candidate Michael Defensor, a master's degree holder from UP.

Sen. Joker Arroyo, who clocked in nine years at UP, said it was unfair to judge a candidate by his college education alone.

"One might be brainy but corrupt. Which would you prefer?" he said.

"We cannot put educational attainment or corruption as one of conditions for candidates because that is already passing judgment," said Arroyo.

Genuine Opposition candidate Manny Villar said people should not impose their standards of candidate desirability on others who may have different standards like honesty and sincerity.

"Brains aren't everything, having a heart for the people is also important," said Villar who only partially met Santiago's criteria, having graduated from UP with a master's degree.

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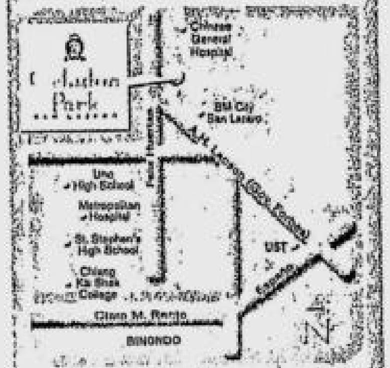

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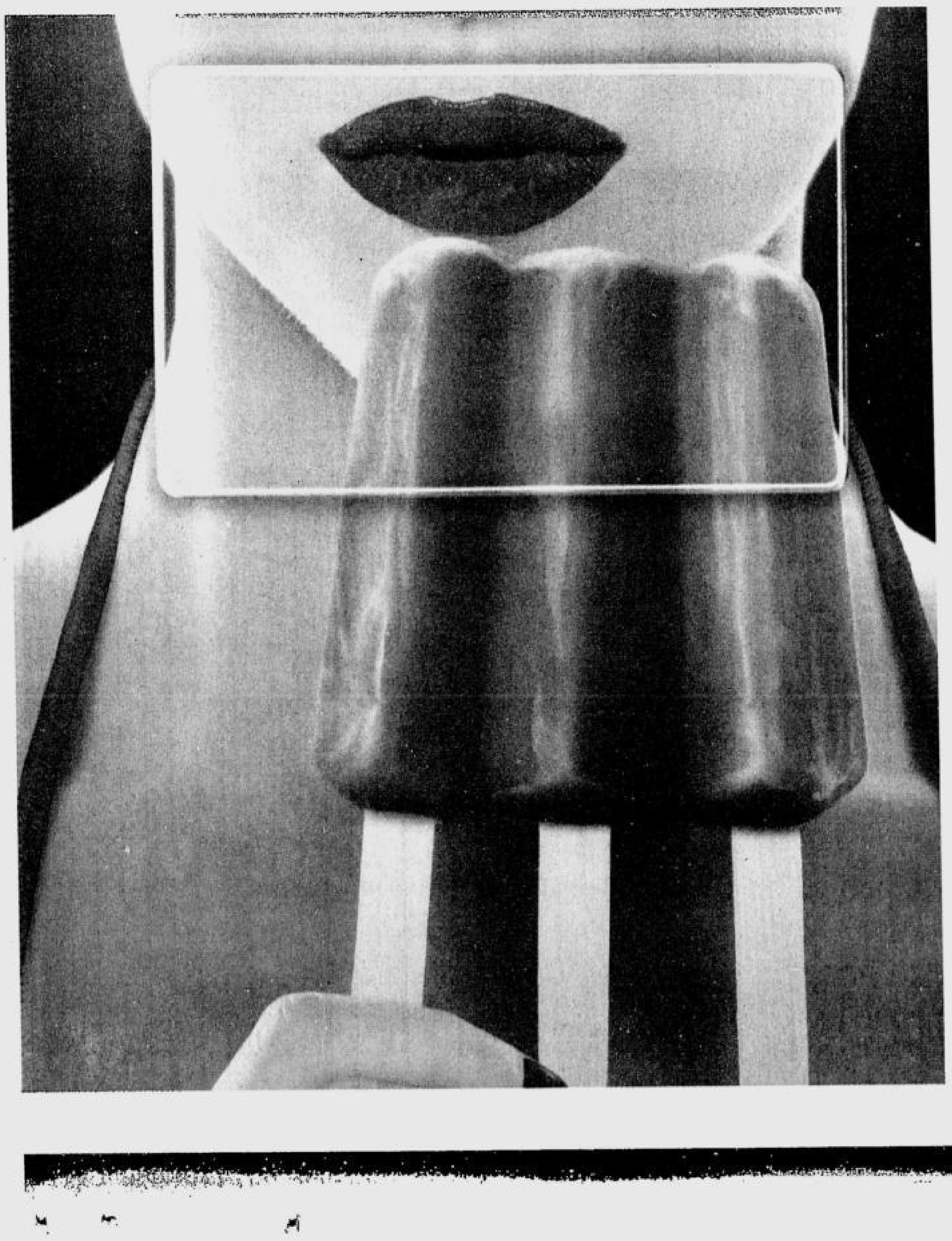

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Erap seeks new leave

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DETAINED FORMER PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada has again asked the Sandiganbayan to be allowed to leave his Tanay, Rizal rest house to undergo an executive medical check-up at the Asian Hospital and Medical Center in Muntinlupa City during the Holy Week.

The antigraft court hearing his 6-year-old plunder case had granted him a 10-hour pass last Tuesday to receive an award during the centenary celebration of San Juan and to visit his mother, Mary Ejercito, at his Polk St. residence in Greenhills.

In a two-page motion filed with the court's Special Division yesterday, Estrada said he was experiencing "intense and severe back pains" which should "not be trivialized" in someone who will be turning 70 in a matter of three weeks. Estrada will be celebrating his birthday on April 19.

"He has been through a lot ... 70 is not spring-chicken age for anyone, and for six years now being detained and shamed could be depressing ... and it would be prudent not to take for granted the difficulties the accused asserts to be feeling now," said Estrada's counsel Rene Saguisag.

The last time Estrada sought treatment for his back pains due to multiple slipped discs was in 2003.

He had undergone two cataract surgeries in December 2001 and February 2002, a knee surgery in December 2004 and a cyst operation on his left eye in February 2006.

Estrada's personal physician Dr. Lorenzo Hocson will appear in court on Monday to justify his hospital confinement which could last from at least one to three days, Saguisag told the INQUIRER over the phone.

San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito will also ask the court that he be allowed to hold his wedding at his father's private estate on June 9.

Ejercito originally planned to wed his fiancé Cindy Lotuaco last Feb. 3 but decided to postpone it because the court disapproved their first motion.

Saguisag had asked the court to reconsider its decision, arguing that holding the wedding in the rest house would mean less problems on security control and expenses.

BUSINESS HUDDLE

President Macapagal-Arroyo confers with Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila before giving her speech at the 26th biennial convention of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry Inc. in the Manila Hotel. She thanked members of the chamber led by its president Francis Chua for their support when "things had seemed uneasy for business and politics." At left is business tycoon Lucio C. Tan, FFCCCII chairman emeritus. LYN RILLON

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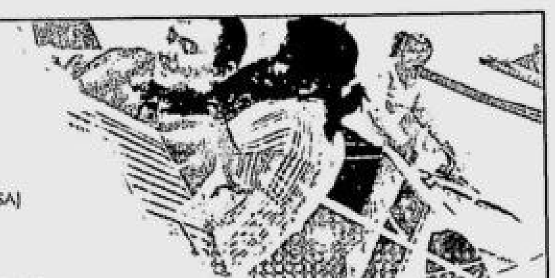

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For full details of courses available, please consult the following website

www.ballarat.edu.au/international

Note that some University of Ballarat IT, accounting, management and business courses are also available at our partner teaching sites in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, in Australia.

You may contact the IDP office below for further details, and for an appointment.

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Neda OKs projects worth ₱49B

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND Development Authority has approved five projects costing a total of P49 billion, including a major education project and a national broadband network to be funded by official development assistance from China.

In a statement, NEDA director-general Romulo Neri yesterday announced that among those approved during a board meeting on Thursday was a five-year Cyber Education Project (CEP) worth P26.48 billion which would provide students, particularly in marginalized areas, access to quality education.

Also approved was the National Broadband Network (NBN) project costing P16.47 billion.

Neri said the project was envisioned to "create seamless connectivity among all national government agencies down to the barangay offices of the local government units (LGUs) to enhance delivery of government services."

The three other projects approved by the Neda board were—the P870-million Biñan-Sucat 230 kV Transmission Line Upgrading project;—the P4.7-billion Pinatubo Hazard Urgent Mitigation Project (PHUMP) Phase III; and, —the P990-million Local Governance Support Program-Local Economic Development (LED).

The CEP, sponsored by the Department of Education, aims to address the lack of basic resources in education such as competent teachers, classrooms, and instructional materials.

Neri said 86 percent or P22.77 billion of total project cost would be financed through a loan from the People's Republic of China while the remaining 14 percent or P3.71 billion would be shouldered by the national government.

The CEP will be implemented in five years and will cover about 271,000 schools and 665 alternative learning centers for out-of-school youths and adults.

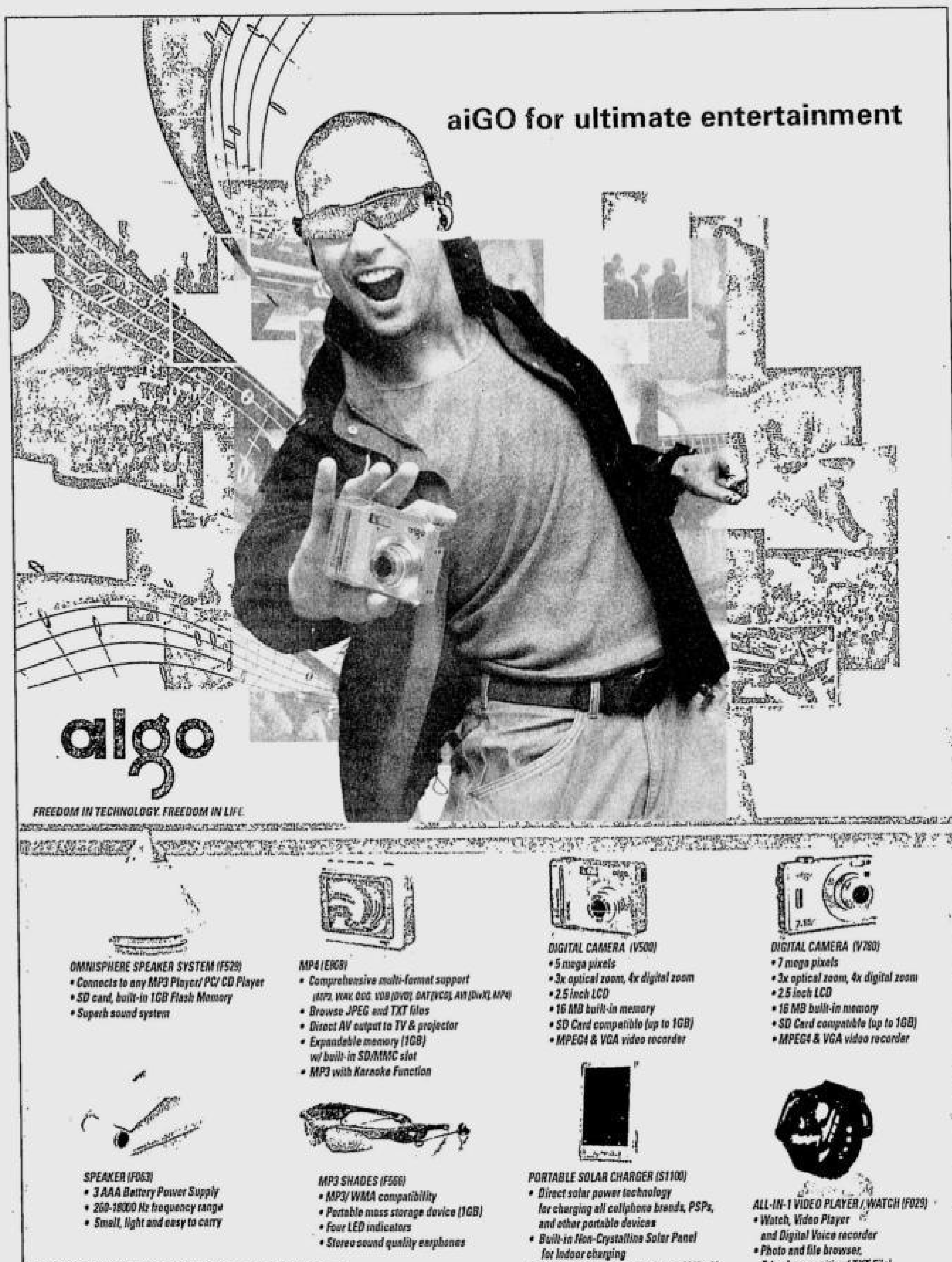
The NBN project, sponsored by the Department of Transportation and Communications Telecommunications Office, will likewise be financed through an ODA from China and will be implemented over a three-year period.

"It is also expected to benefit government offices and the LGUs as cost savings will be generated from the operations and maintenance of old government communications network, on communication expenses due to Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP), on Internet connection, and from avoided travel," Neri said.

About 45.8 percent of the total cost of the Biñan-Sucat Transmission Line Upgrading Project will be financed through a loan from Calyon Corporate and Investment Bank while the remaining 54.2 percent will be sourced from the National Transmission Corporation's internal cash generation. The project is targeted for commissioning by September 2008.

The Pinatubo Hazard Urgent Mitigation Project was proposed for possible funding (73.3 percent of total cost) by the Japan Bank for International Cooperation under the 27th Yen Loan Package. The project is targeted to be implemented between 2007 and 2011.

The Local Governance Support Program-Local Economic Development will be funded through a CIDA grant of P792 million. The government will provide counterpart funding equivalent to 25 percent of the total, which will be sourced from the Department of Interior and Local Government and from participating LGUs. The program will be implemented over a period of eight years starting mid-2007.



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Correction

IN THE MARCH 30 ISSUE, a Page A1 story— "Tagaytay trip ends in Palace fun"—misstated the description of the grandchildren of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Ms Arroyo is grandmother to three girls and one boy—not "four little girls."

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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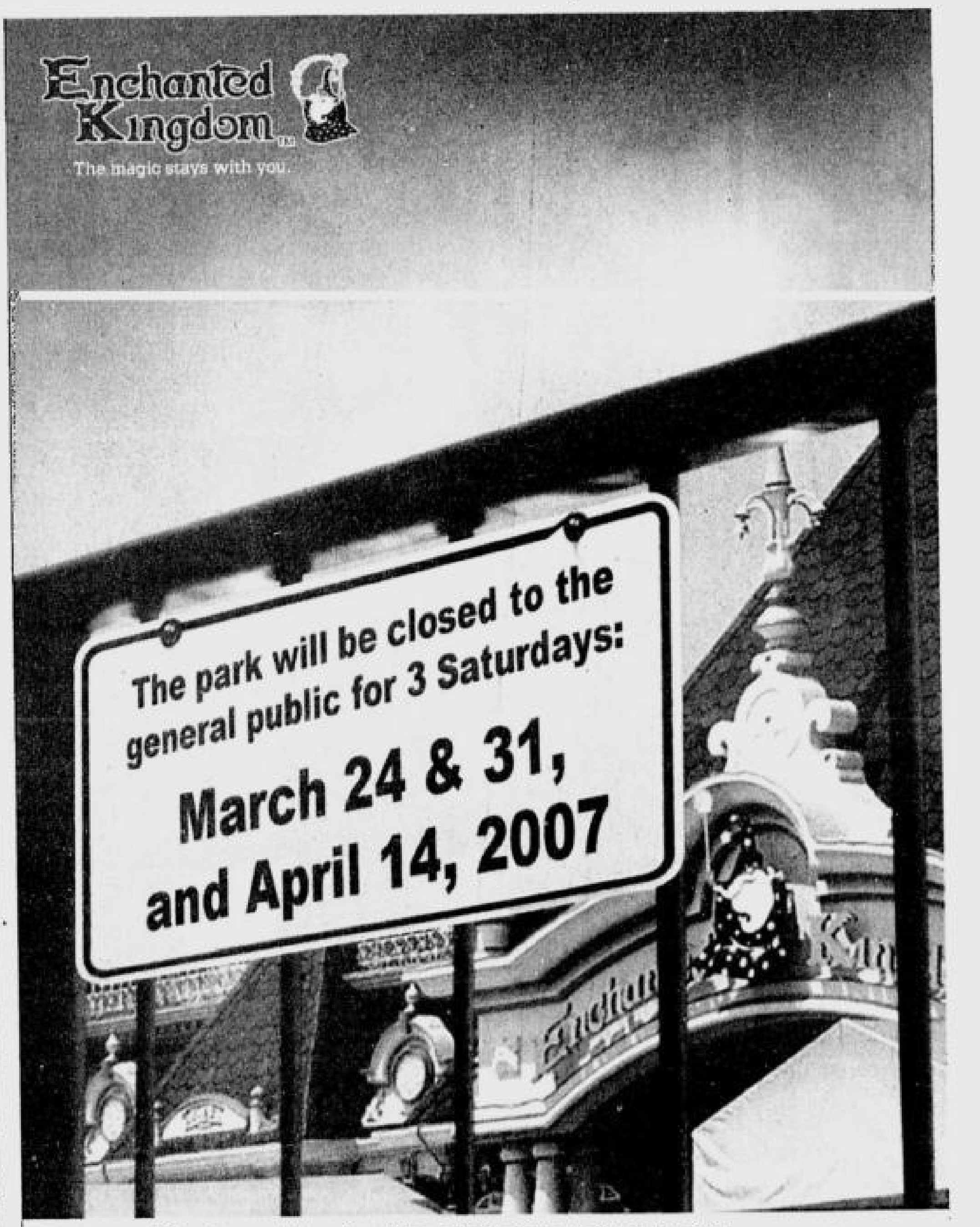

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DAHIL SMART TAYO

ONE VS. MANY

Why DTI's dismissal of the petition for safeguard measures in the STPP Industry is for the Public's greater good.

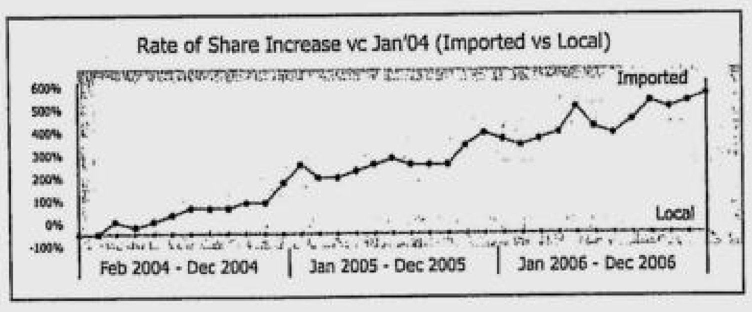
Recently, the Department of Trade and Industry decided to dismiss a petition for general safeguard measures on imported Sodium Tripolyphosphates-Technical Grade (STPP-TG). This means that local soap and detergent manufacturers will no longer be constrained to source STPP, which is one of their primary ingredients, exclusively from a sole local source. This will result in better-value products for consumers. Certain parties have objected to the decision, citing the potential damage it could do to the STPP industry. But as members of the downstream but larger soap and detergent manufacturing industry and those who directly serve the public, we believe that DTI acted responsibly, basing its decision on clear and irrefutable facts, and on the interest of the public:

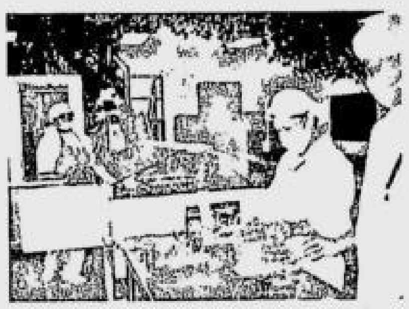
Safeguard measures will force consumers to pay 75 centavos more for every 100g of detergent.

1. **Because of the safeguard measures, locally-made detergents are losing competitiveness vs. imported brands.** Low-cost, imported detergents are the fastest-growing segment of the market. With safeguard measures in place, the raw materials cost of Philippine-made detergents will prevent them from pricing themselves competitively against imports from China, Indonesia and Vietnam, even after offsetting the cost of their shipping and duties. This means Filipino consumers who wish to buy Philippine-made detergents will pay more.

Comparative Consumer Price of 100g Detergent

	Phil-made with STPP Safeguard	Phil-made w/o STPP Safeguard	Imported Product (Vietnam)
Consumer price per 100g	₱ 9.75	₱ 9.00	₱ 9.00
% Price Increase vs. Vietnam	+ 8%		





SDAP employees working to deliver quality Philippine-made detergents

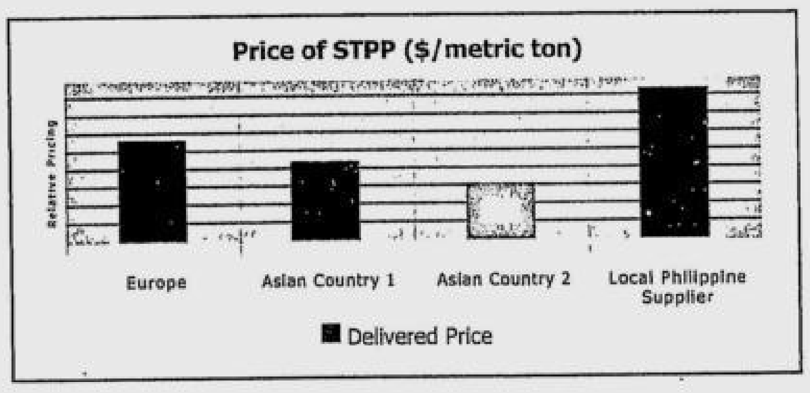
2. **With the safeguard measures, more Filipinos will lose their jobs.** The risk of unemployment is far greater with the demise of the local detergent industry, versus that of a single, uncompetitive supplier of STPP.

Soap and Detergent Association Direct Employment (Combined) : Over 5,000
Sole Supplier Direct Employees : 30

3. **Safeguard measures will only protect one supplier.** There is no "local STPP industry". There is one company. The local STPP supplier claims to need "only 3 years to get competitive", yet it has enjoyed tariff protection for the past 30 years and millions of dollars of support via duties.

4. **The provisional safeguard measure was ineffective.** Beginning last year, a provisional safeguard measure was imposed by the DTI for 200 days. During that period, there was ZERO increase in the client base of local STPP supply. There is no reason to impose a definitive safeguard measure that had zero positive impact and only hurt the local detergent industry. The only winners in the imposition of the provisional safeguard measure were the detergent manufacturing companies in China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and like markets who have been exporting their products in increasing quantities into the Philippines!

5. **There is no unfair trade practice.** Finally, a case of unfair low prices cannot be made when the data clearly shows that multiple markets can supply STPP far more efficiently; and in fact, the local supply of STPP is among the highest priced in the world. Unfair low pricing occurs when a singular market, such as China, has an irregularly low price. But global STPP prices are in a consistent cost range across multiple continents.

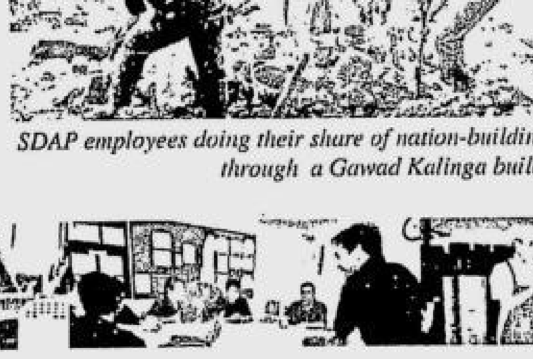


What do these facts prove?

1. **Benefit of many vs. one.** It is clear that the non-imposition of a definitive safeguard measure is in the best interests of Filipino competitiveness, employment and consumers. These far outweigh the needs of a singular company.

2. **No local detergent industry, no local STPP industry.** The local STPP industry relies on the soap and detergent industry to buy most of its STPP production. Safeguard measures would undermine local soap and detergent manufacturing competitiveness, thereby undermining the market of the very industry the safeguard measures would seek to protect.

The facts make it clear that the DTI decision will benefit our country in the end. Filipinos will appreciate the impact this will deliver to improving their lives and will see it as a wise decision -- a case of government seeing the bigger picture, and acting on the needs of many, instead of just one.



SDAP employees doing their share of nation-building through a Gawad Kalinga build.

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ASSOCIATION
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‘Plant a lover’ wins over ‘Plan a revolt’

PLANT A LOVER.

This is the best that the Genuine Opposition could come up with, brainstorming on a “memory aid” to help voters recall the names of the 11 GO senatorial candidates.

GO campaign strategists used a combination of first names and surnames of the candidates to come up with the phrase.

Plant A Lover stands for Pimentel, Loren, Aquino, Nikki, Trillanes, Alan, Lacson, Osmeña, Villar, Escudero and Roco.

Anna Dominique “Nikki” Coseteng opted to use her nickname while Taguig Rep. Alan Cayetano preferred his first name as the disqualification of a namesake candidate has yet to be decided.

Loren Legarda’s also chose her first name. The rest of the candidates used their surnames: Senate President Manuel Villar, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, John Osmeña, Representatives Benigno Aquino III and Francis Escudero, Aquilino Pimentel III, Antonio Trillanes IV and Sonia Roco.

Adel Tamano, the GO campaign spokesman, said they tried a number of combinations coming up with, among others, the phrase, Plan A Revolt.

This was rejected as it could become controversial and bring accusations of sedition against the candidates.

Tamano said GO was aiming for an 11 to 1 victory, citing recent surveys showing that majority of the likely winners in the top 12 could be GO candidates.

In the latest Social Weather Stations survey conducted last month, six GO candidates were in the magic 12. *Dona Pazzibugan*

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Mayor defies suspension over lampposts scam

From page A1

steel railings, were brought in to surround the building.

Meanwhile, the Ombudsman Visayas said it was also looking into what could be another scam in the DPWH projects related to the Asean summit, this time involving surveillance cameras that may have cost the government P2 million each, for a total of P90 million.

The DPWH bought 42 surveillance cameras that were installed in the ceremonial routes. *(See story on Page A15.)*

Defense Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, the DPWH secretary at the time, who was in Cebu yesterday, said he welcomed the investigation.

He said the DPWH would be able to provide the complete documents covering the transactions.

Ebdane said he had nothing to do with the alleged overpricing as his approval for the project was only "ministerial."

Lacson: They are scapegoats

Genuine Opposition reelectionist candidate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who was here yesterday, claimed the local officials who were ordered suspended for the overpricing scam were being used as scapegoats to save some national officials whom he did not name.

Lacson said the Road Users' Tax Board should also be investigated as he claimed funds from the road users' tax, "which should only be used for the upkeep of the country's roads," were used to fund the project.

The Ombudsman Visayas recommended the suspension of Ouano, Lapu-Lapu City Mayor Arturo Radaza and top regional officials of the Department of Public Works and Highways after a fact-finding committee found evidence of collusion between the winning bidders and those who prepared the program of works for the project that was carried out by the DPWH.

Grave misconduct

The committee had recommended that the respondents be investigated for graft, dishonesty or grave misconduct.

The committee also found that the government had spent P365.8 million for the street-lighting project, not P120 million as claimed by DPWH regional officials.

A representative from the Visayas Ombudsman's Office attempted to serve the suspension order on Ouano at about 8 a.m. yesterday but no one was willing to accept it, according to Virginia Palanca-Santiago, the acting Ombudsman for the Visayas.

But even before receiving the suspension order, Ouano, through his lawyer, was already at the Court of Appeals yesterday to petition for a temporary restraining order.

Except for a few close allies of Ouano and several people applying for residence certificates, no one was allowed into the building, paralyzing transactions at the city hall.

Ouano reportedly went to his office very early yesterday but left before 8 a.m., according to one of his staff. But another staff member said he was just inside the building.

The mayor, who has not been seen in public since Thursday, refused to answer calls made to his cell phone.

His son, Thadeo Jovito "Jonkie" Ouano, when reached through his mobile phone, said the suspension order was unfair.

'Decision rushed'

"My father has not received any subpoena. [He] was not allowed to explain his side. There was no due process. It seemed that the decision was rushed," said the younger Ouano, who is running for mayor of Mandaue in the May 14 elections, seeking to succeed his father who is on his last term.

The crowd of supporters began dispersing at around 4 p.m. after they heard that the DILG would not be able to serve the suspension order because it has yet to be signed by Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno. But the heavy equipment surrounding the building stayed.

Earlier yesterday, Rene Burdeos, the DILG regional director, said his office had yet to receive the order. But he said once they get the order, it would be implemented.

Regional legal officer Danilo Almendras said that as of 2 p.m. yesterday, no order had been received by his office.

By contrast, it was business as usual at the Lapu-Lapu City Hall where Radaza quietly held meetings with his department heads and employees. He told them to stay calm.

Legal means

Radaza, like Ouano, also went to the appellate court to get a TRO. But unlike Ouano, he did not call for supporters to barricade the city hall.

He told reporters that he would not stop the DILG from serving the suspension order. But he would take all legal remedies available to him to prove he was innocent of the allegations, he said.

Councilor Damian Gomez, a Radaza ally, said the mayor's supporters had planned on holding a vigil but the mayor stopped them.

City employees sympathetic to Radaza wore red armbands to protest his suspension.

Radaza also met with Vice Mayor Norma Patalinghug and employees from different departments to thank them for their support.

Replacements

Ouano and Radaza were included in the case after it was found that they had approved the programs of works prepared by their city engineering offices, that the DPWH used as a basis for the purchase of the allegedly overpriced lampposts installed in their cities.

Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan said he had received the Ombudsman's order to suspend the DPWH regional officials and would be implementing them yesterday.

He briefed his staff on the implications of the suspension order. He said he had identified the people who would take over from the suspended officials.

Robert Lala, the DPWH regional director and his eight subordinates who were suspended along with him, left for Manila yesterday after Bonoan ordered them to report to the DPWH national office, according to a staff member at the DPWH office here who asked not to be named.

Lacson said the 800-percent overprice of the Cebu lampposts may have even contributed to the administration's election campaign kitty. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

ZAMCELCO
GM'S OFFICE
27 [illegible] 2007

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF THE OVER-ALL TARIFF ADJUSTMENT WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007 - 087 RC

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., (ZAMCELCO),
Petitioner,
x---x

DOCKETED
Date: MAR 27 2007
By:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on March 14, 2007, Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) filed with the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9136 (R.A. 9136) an Amended Petition for approval of the over-all tariff adjustment, with prayer for provisional authority.

In the said Petition, ZAMCELCO proposed the following schedule of rate adjustments to be applied for each customer class:

Customer Class	Proposed Rate	Existing Rate Dec. 2006	Difference
Residential:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso / kWh)	0.8566	0.5613	0.2953
Supply System Charge (Peso / kWh)	0.2501	0.2803	(0.0302)
Metering System Charge (Peso / kWh)	0.3625	0.1781	0.1844
Metering Retail (Peso / customer / month)	50.0000	5.0000	45.0000
Loan Condonation – (Peso / kWh)		(0.0829)	0.0829
Total Peso / kWh	1.4692	0.9368	0.5324
Metering Peso/Customer/month	50.0000	5.0000	45.0000
Average Peso/kwh Distribution system rate	1.7473	0.9646	0.7827
Commercial:			
Distribution System (Peso / kWh)	0.4890	0.2359	0.2531
Supply (Peso / customer / month)	44.9577	42.2300	2.7277
Metering (Peso / customer / month)	115.1800	252.2600	(137.0800)
Loan Condonation – (Peso/kWh)		(0.0347)	0.0347
– (Peso/Cust/mo)		(17.5995)	17.5995
Peso / kWh	0.4890	0.2012	0.2878
Peso / customer / month	160.1377	276.8905	(116.7528)
Average Peso / kWh Distribution system rate	0.6948	0.5571	0.1378
Industrial:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso / kWh)	0.2158	0.2168	(0.0010)
Distribution Demand Charge (Peso / kWh)	161.0590	15.5100	145.5490
Supply (Peso / customer / month)	44.9580	42.2300	2.7280
Metering (Peso / Customer / month)	115.1800	697.0500	(581.8700)
Loan Condonation – (Peso/kWh)		(0.0447)	0.0447
– (Peso/Cust/mo)		(48.9369)	48.9369
Total Peso / kWh	0.2158	0.2168	(0.0010)
Total Peso / kWh	161.0590	15.5100	145.5490
Total Peso / customer / month	160.1380	690.3431	(530.2051)
Average Peso / kwh Distribution system rate	0.5007	0.2191	0.2815
Customer Class	**Proposed Rate**	**Existing Rate**	**Difference**
Public Buildings:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso / kWh)	0.3764	0.1940	0.1824
Supply Retail Charge (Peso/customer/month)	44.9580	42.2300	2.7280
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/customer/month)	115.1800	252.2600	(137.0800)
Loan Condonation – (Peso/kWh)		(0.0305)	0.0305
– (Peso/Cust/mo)		(17.5995)	17.5995
Total Peso / kWh	0.3764	0.1635	0.2129
Total Peso / customer / month	160.1380	276.8905	(116.7525)
Average Peso / kWh Distribution system rate	0.4566	0.3022	0.1544
Street Lights:			
Distribution System Charge (Peso / kWh)	2.4983	0.2111	2.2872
Supply Retail Charge (Peso/customer/month)	44.9580	42.2300	2.7280
Metering Retail Charge (Peso/customer/month)	115.1800	36.3800	78.8000
Loan Condonation – (Peso/kWh)		(0.0321)	0.0321
– (Peso/Cust/mo)		(2.3897)	2.3897
Total Peso / kWh	2.4983	0.1790	2.3193
Total Peso / customer / month	160.1380	76.2203	83.9177
Average Peso / kWh distribution system rate	2.6327	0.2430	2.3897
Industrial Large Load:			
Distribution Demand Charge (Peso/kW)	66.6470	21.7800	44.8670
Distribution system charge (Peso/kWh)	0.2028	0.2170	(0.0142)
Supply Retail Charge (Peso/customer/month)	44.9580	42.2300	2.7280
Metering Customer Charge (Peso/Cust/mo)	115.1800	697.0500	(581.8700)
Loan Condonation – (Peso/kWh)		(0.0313)	0.0313
– (Peso/Cust/mo)		(48.9385)	48.9385
Peso / kWh	0.2028	0.1857	0.0171
Peso / kW	66.6470	21.7800	44.8670
Peso / customer / month	160.1380	690.3415	(530.2035)
Average Peso / kWh Distribution system rate	0.3739	0.2429	0.1309
TOTAL AVERAGE PESO/kWh	**1.0755**	**0.6064**	**0.4690**

The Commission has set the petition for initial hearing and pre-trial conference on:

1. **April 16, 2007 (Monday), at nine o'clock in the morning to twelve o'clock noon (9:00 A.M. to 12:00 nn)** at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City.
2. **May 11, 2007 (Friday) at nine o'clock in the morning to four o'clock in the afternoon (9:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.)** at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City.
3. **May 22, 2007, (Tuesday) at nine o'clock in the morning to twelve o'clock noon (9:00 A.M. to 12:00 nn)** at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's initerest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the petition or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the petition may request the petitioner, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the petition. The petitioner is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the petition and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the petition and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable, **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, and **JOSE C. REYES**, Energy Regulatory Commission, this 26th day of March, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN**
Executive Director

(PDI–March 31, 2007)

Rare breast cancer . . .

From page A1

Licyayo decided to go public. Fellow police officers here could only imagine how he must have suffered, having kept his cancer secret all this time.

Through "Cancer Chat," organized by Minda's Buddies, a Baguio-based group of breast cancer patients and survivors, Licyayo shared with the public his battle against the deadly disease and how he overcame the painful surgeries and treatment.

He was the only male cancer survivor to speak out during the forum, although local advocates for cancer victims said a male doctor in the city was also being treated for the disease.

Licyayo was diagnosed with breast cancer in November 2003, three months after he retired from the police force, which he served for almost 20 years.

Small lump

He retired as commanding officer of a unit in the Cordillera police. Before that, he served as chief of legal service of the regional police from 1994 to 1998.

"I was feeling uneasy because of a lump in my left breast. I felt weak. I did not have the strength [to do my daily activities], Licyayo told the INQUIRER.

It was Licyayo's eldest son, Dr. Allan Licyayo, who first detected the tumor.

Allan said his father told him about a small lump in his breast.

In February 2004, Licyayo had surgery which removed his left nipple. Then he went through four cycles of chemotherapy and took oral medications every day for almost three years.

ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

LICYAYO: I am one of those in the one percent.

Today, Licyayo is cancer-free.

"I had a checkup in January this year. My doctor said there's no evidence of cancer [in my body]," Licyayo said, happy to have a second chance in life.

"I take one day at a time and live life meaningfully every day," he said.

Being a cancer survivor, Licyayo has changed his diet. He stays away from red meat and is trying to be a vegetarian.

"When I was undergoing chemotherapy, I became a bona fide member of the *kalbo* (bald) generation. I said goodbye to barber shops. I also put away my comb," he said in jest.

Licyayo's wife, Filipina, said the family decided to keep Licyayo's condition a secret, to spare him the humiliation.

"Because he is a man, I did not want his disease to become public. Breast cancer is a woman's disease. That's why we decided to keep his illness a secret," Filipina said.

Regular checkup

And since he had already retired, the family chose not to inform Licyayo's colleagues about his condition.

Even Supt. Maria Alesandra Adanglao, chief of Baguio City police's medical team, admitted to being clueless about Licyayo's condition.

Stunned by the news, Adanglao said she would start convincing policemen here to undergo regular medical examinations and to monitor their health.

"[The PNP is] male-dominated. They should not take their health for granted. They should have an annual medical checkup. They should be health-conscious," she said.

SPO2 Norbert Holman of the Baguio City police said: "We feel sorry for him because he's our colleague. [Cancer] is a disease. There is no way of knowing if we're going to get it too. Who knows, one of us might already have cancer."

Better survivors

Dr. Jasmin Reyes-Igama, a Baguio-based oncologist, said she would treat an average of two breast cancer patients monthly, almost all of them women.

Igama said she last examined a male breast cancer patient in 2005.

She said male patients had better chances of surviving breast cancer than female patients because of hormonal differences.

Male patients, Igama added, responded better to treatment than females.

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Chief Administrative Officer
BAC Chairman

(PDI - March 31 & April 10, 2007)

Just doing my job, DAR chief tells Iloilo execs

By TJ Burgonio

AGRARIAN REFORM SECRETARY Nasser Pangandaman yesterday expressed dismay over a resolution passed by a group of local officials and sugar industry executives in Negros Occidental declaring that he was unwelcome in the province after he installed a group of agrarian reform beneficiaries in a sugar hacienda there last week.

"That's very unfair. We're just doing our job," Pangandaman said.

The Association of Negros Executives, a group of local government officials and sugar industry stakeholders opposing the award of a portion of the 400-hectare Hacienda Velez Malaga in La Castellana town to the farmers, have passed a resolution declaring Pangandaman "persona non grata."

Pangandaman defended his action, saying the farmer-beneficiaries that he installed had a right to the portion of the hacienda awarded to them as they had long been granted a collective certificate of land ownership award (Cloa).

"The farmers have the right to occupy the land. I believe we did not act beyond our mandate under the law," he said.

The go-signal for the installation of the 122 beneficiaries was given in September 2006 but Pangandaman failed several times to carry it out, prompting the Task Force Mapalad farmers' organization to target him for protests.

Some of the beneficiaries camped out and went on a hunger strike last Feb. 20 outside the agrarian reform office in Quezon City.

On March 22, Pangandaman installed 57 of the beneficiaries in a 53-hectare portion of the hacienda despite resistance from a rival group of farmers loyal to hacienda owner Roberto Cuenca.

But the secretary came in for more opposition, this time from the Association of Negros Executives.

Pangandaman appealed to the officials and stakeholders to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program in the province as their support was crucial to the installation of the rest of the beneficiaries.

As of December 2006, 336,558 hectares out of the targeted 597,153 hectares have been distributed under CARP in Western Visayas.

In Negros Occidental alone, only 150,037 hectares out of 262,832 hectares have been distributed, a sign of strong landowner resistance to land reform, the TFM said.

Pangandaman has vowed to install the 65 remaining beneficiaries once the DAR regional office in Negros Occidental resolves a petition by the rival farmers' group questioning the legitimacy of the former group's claim.

Because of the tense situation, he has arranged for a police community precinct to be set up in the area.

The Hacienda Velez-Malaga case is one of the longest-running agrarian reform disputes in the country. The DAR placed the hacienda under CARP in 1996, but the landowner contested it in court.

In 2002, the department awarded the land to the farmers. Two years later, the Supreme Court ruled in *DAR vs Cuenca* that all agrarian reform controversies fall under DAR jurisdiction, clearing the way for the beneficiaries' installation. This was not enforced until recently.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, March 31, 2007
5th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Ez 37:21-28
Gospel: John 11:45-56

Many of the Jews who had come with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw what he did; but some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees called the Sanhedrin Council.

They said, "What are we to do? For this man keeps on giving miraculous signs. If we let him go on like this, all the people will believe in him and, as a result of this, the Romans will come and sweep away our Holy Place and our nation."

Then one of them, Caiaphas, who was High Priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all nor do you see clearly what you need. It is better to have one man die for the people than to let the whole nation be destroyed."

In saying this Caiaphas did not speak for himself, but being High Priest that year, he foretold as a prophet that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the scattered children of God. So, from that day on, they were determined to kill him.

Because of this, Jesus no longer moved about freely among the Jews. He withdrew instead to the country near the wilderness and stayed with his disciples in a town called Ephraim.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand and people from everywhere were coming to Jerusalem to purify themselves before the Passover. They looked for Jesus and as they stood in the Temple, they talked with one another, "What do you think? Will he come to the festival?"

Commentary

These are the promises of God to bring together his people and bring them back home, cleansing them from their evil and sin, giving them a shepherd and a place to live in peace, and where he can put his sanctuary among them forever. And God will make Israel holy in the sight of all the nations. This is what God has done for his people and it is what will be done for all of us in Jesus, in ways we could never have imagined.

Jesus has brought Lazarus back to life and people believe in him and there is dissension and sharp division over Jesus' person, his works and his words—and yet no matter what he does (and it is always about life) there are those who are intent on killing him, silencing him so that their collusion with Rome might continue. So it is better that Jesus dies for the people—again in a way they could never have conceived. And they plan to kill him. Where do we stand? In collusion with politics, economics, nationalistic policy, military might that uses religion when it serves their purposes, or do we stand with Jesus who is only and always life, ever more abundantly for everyone?

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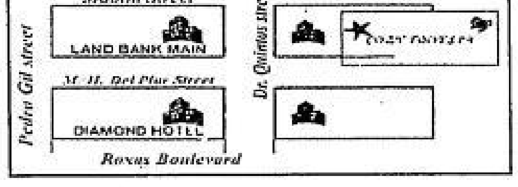

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CONFLICT OF LAWS	: Justice Jorge Coquia : Dean Prudencio Valencia : Dean Amado Valdez
LAND TITLES & DEEDS	: Dir. Ramon Cassanova : Atty. Ariel Arias
TAXATION LAW	: Dean Joe-Santos Bisquera : Justice Japar Dimaampao : Atty. Nicasio Cabaneiro : Atty. Nicanor Padilla, Jr.
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Puno defers relief of Manila cop chief

From page A1

lief of the station commander and the precinct commander will still be in effect," Yamsuan said.

On Thursday, a livid Puno ordered the administrative relief of the three officers and an investigation into lapses in the handling of the hostage-taking incident.

Administrative relief means the officer involved is not allowed to perform his duties, a temporary condition usually imposed when an officer is under investigation. He can be reinstated once he is cleared.

In a statement yesterday, Puno said the deferment of Abarzosa's relief "does not mean that the Manila district director is already off the hook, as he is still under investigation by a PNP panel."

Second chance

Puno also pointed out that Abarzosa "is already in the midst of implementing his security plan" for the elections in Manila.

"We will give him a chance to air his side in connection with his handling of the hostage situation," Puno said.

Twenty-six children and four teachers from a day care center in the Parola compound were on their way to a field trip on Wednesday when the center's owner, Armando "Jun" Ducat, and aide Caesar Carbonell took control of the children's bus at gunpoint in protest against corruption in government. They surrendered after 10 hours.

Calderon said at a press conference the police needed a "continuous administration" of the MPD and the post of MPD director was "critical."

Where buck stops

But Calderon also said the buck stopped with Abarzosa, Cubacub and Rosales.

"This is command responsibility ... We were able to identify it is up to the level of Colonel Abarzosa and the two officers."

Calderon admitted there were "definitely" lapses in police procedures.

First, he said, the scene of the incident was not controlled properly. "People were able to get near the bus, to include members of the media (and) other personalities."

"It should be the role of the area commander to really secure the area. There appears to be nothing like that."

'Atienza was there'

Calderon said he had ordered the MPD to undergo training in hostage negotiations and crisis management.

National Capital Region Police Office Deputy Director Gen. Reynaldo Varilla insisted everything was under control during the incident.

Varilla said the crisis management committee, headed by Mayor Lito Atienza, was activated and working despite Puno's statement that it seemed no one was in charge.

Visibly irritated, Varilla told reporters that Atienza was involved in the decision-making. "All the time Mayor Atienza was there," Varilla said. "It is not right to say that Mayor Atienza was not involved. He was just not very visible. But every time we had discussions with Chair (Bayani) Fernando (of the Metro Manila Development Authority), Mayor Atienza was involved."

Radio station didn't heed plea

Varilla said the police would look into the local media's policy on covering hostage-taking situations.

Varilla said a radio station partly hindered police efforts to reach Ducat when the station made initial contact with the hostage-taker and gave him airtime.

"A radio station did not heed our pleas to refrain from talking with the hostage-taker and from airing his demands," Varilla said.

He also complained that the press disregarded police requests to stay behind the police lines. He said he had ordered the construction of stronger steel barricades to hold off the crowd.

In a report to the PNP headquarters, Varilla pointed out several lapses the police had committed.

On the part of the negotiating team, the report said the rotation of negotiators was not well planned and that there were other people who conducted the negotiations.

Previously, Varilla said in TV interviews that he did not give clearance for Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr. and Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson to enter the bus and talk with Ducat.

The report noted that the crowd control group was insufficient in number, exposing bystanders, reporters and officials to unnecessary risks.

Up to Puno

Of the participation of Revilla and Singson in the negotiations, Varilla told reporters: "They were warned of the consequences, that it (joining in) is not allowed."

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said President Macapagal-Arroyo "is leaving [the matter of] disciplinary actions to the Department of Interior and Local Government."

"A review of police procedures, ground rules as well as the fitness of police commanders is in order," Bunye said.

Bunye reiterated Ms Arroyo's order for the immediate prosecution of Ducat and Carbonell. He said the President "wants speedy justice for the hostage-takers."

15 days

Ducat and Carbonell have 15 days to present their defense after their request for preliminary investigation was granted by the city prosecutor.

They have been charged with serious illegal detention and illegal possession of firearms and explosives in relation to the election gun ban, Inquest Division chief Nelson Salva said.

The first charge is nonbailable and punishable by reclusion perpetua (life sentence), Salva said. *With reports from Juliet Labog-Javellana, Allison W. Lopez, Julie M. Aurelio and Cynthia D. Balana*

Paris-based rights group also hits RP for slays

From page A1

"[The Philippines] used to be low among our concerns, but the trend here in recent years has been the most alarming," Dr. Anne Christine Habbard, former FIDH secretary general, said in a forum held yesterday at the Ateneo de Manila Graduate School in Makati City.

The FIDH is a network of human rights organizations established in the 1920s, and currently covers some 140 groups around the world, Habbard said. Its affiliate in Manila is the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates (Pahra).

The 2006 report is the 10th annual FIDH publication specifically reviewing the situation faced by human rights "defenders" worldwide. The term broadly applies to rights advocates in civil society, politics, media, academe, religious sector, etc.

After Burma et al.

On a list of Asian countries with deteriorating human rights records, the Philippines now "comes quite soon after" the likes of Burma (Myanmar), Laos, North Korea, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, said Habbard, a French national.

For each yearly report, "we chose one country per continent" for the launch, and this year the Philippines was picked "because the situation [here] is terrible ... for individuals defending human rights," she said.

Sections of the report covering the Philippines, which Habbard discussed during the forum, cited "the lack of inquiry into several extrajudicial killings of [rights] defenders."

"Their perpetrators and/or those behind them [have] escaped any kind of prosecution. As of end 2006, most of the cases of defenders who were executed in 2005 remained unpunished," the report noted.

40 victims

Drawing from sources such as Task Force Detainees, bulatlat.com and Pahra records, the report named up to 40 victims of alleged extrajudicial killings carried out in 2005 and 2006.

"In addition to the violent repression of demonstrations ... the number of extrajudicial killings of political opponents, HR defenders, journalists, lawyers, union and community leaders who denounced the violations committed by the government and the army, dramatically increased," it said, adding:

"The most affected regions were the ones where there is a strong military presence. "The authors of these killings were usually unidentified men on motorcycles, suspected of having ties with the army, the police, and other law enforcement agencies, who in most cases were sheltered from any legal proceedings, and who therefore enjoyed the utmost impunity.

"The situation was aggravated by the incapacity, the unwillingness, or the complicity of the government to prosecute the authors of these violations, including mining or timber corporations, large land owners and armed groups."

The report cited government efforts to address the unsolved murders, like the creation of Task Force Usig and the Melo Commission, but said: "It is feared that these measures will remain superficial."

It noted how President Macapagal-Arroyo, in her July 2006 State of the Nation Address, "paid a glowing tribute to Gen. Jovito Palparan, for his 'fight against the enemies' in Central Luzon."

It said Palparan was "known for his attacks against human rights defenders" and was "reportedly behind the abduction and assassination of several of them."

Impunity

In the open forum, Pahra chair Max de Mesa said the climate of "impunity" had "reached another qualitative level" with the confirmed entry of Palparan, now retired from the military, into politics.

Palparan, 57, filed on Wednesday his certificate of acceptance as No. 1 nominee of the party-list group Bantay in the May 14 elections.

"It's a go-signal for human rights violations to be 'congressionalized,'" De Leon said.

Habbard said the case of a Palparan further entrenching himself in power was "no longer a unique occurrence" in the world.

This is partly because "human rights has become just one of the many discourses we have today, and states feel less and less obligated to act on abuses," she said.

The FIDH report practically echoed the observations made by Philip Alston, a UN special rapporteur on human rights who visited the Philippines on a fact-finding mission early this year.

Alston early this week presented his initial findings to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, in which he noted the "passivity, bordering on an abdication of responsibility," on the part of authorities assigned to address the political killings.

He also said the military, and not the purges of the Communist Party of the Philippines, was responsible for "a significant" number of the summary executions.

IN THE KNOW

Paris-based group formed in 1922

THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF HUman Rights Leagues (Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme, or FIDH) is a worldwide alliance of human rights groups.

Created in 1922 on the initiative of a dozen European national groups, the Paris-based FIDH is the first international organization formed to defend human rights and campaign for world peace.

It fought against Nazism in the 1930s and 1940s and briefly dispersed after its president, Victor Basch, was assassinated in France in 1944.

The FIDH was reconstituted on Oct. 31, 1948, and two of its leaders—Rene Cassin and Joseph Paul-Boncour—took part in the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that was adopted on Dec. 10, 1948.

Since then, the FIDH has established as its main goal the concrete application of the principles in the declaration.

It is now a coalition of 141 human rights groups in nearly 100 countries, with activities ranging from judicial inquiry, trial observation, research, advocacy and litigation.

Its priorities are set by its triennial world congress and international board (22 members), with the support of its international secretariàt (30 staff members).

In 2001-03, the FIDH carried out 111 fact-finding and observation missions, published 201 reports covering 80 countries, and launched 1,300 specific interventions on cases. In 2004, it addressed 1,154 human rights cases in over 90 countries.

Last March 13, the FIDH and its member-organization, the Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates, expressed concern over the assassination of Siche Gandinao, a witness of an extrajudicial killing who had testified to United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston in February.

The group also expressed concern over the ratification last month of the Philippines' antiterror law.

"This new piece of legislation, widely opposed by the Filipino civil society, does not provide for the necessary human rights safeguards," FIDH president Sidiki Kaba said in a statement. *Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research*

'Grossly surprising:' Why did it take witnesses 20 years?

From page A1

for resolution. Both parties were given 10 days to comment on points raised by the other side.

The multiple murder case against Ocampo was filed after the discovery in Leyte last year of what the military claimed was a mass grave supposedly containing the skeletal remains of the murdered spies.

Ocampo has denied the charges and his supporters have questioned the filing of the case against him at a time when his party-list group, Bayan Muna, was in the midst of an election campaign.

Human nature

"Why did it take the government over 20 years to find the remains? What was the reason the witnesses came up [with]?" Gutierrez asked Devanadera during the hearing.

Gutierrez said that since the witnesses included relatives of the victims, human nature would have led them to speak out earlier against the murders of their loved ones who they knew were buried six feet under.

"Isn't it very surprising, highly surprising, grossly surprising why it took 20 years for the informants to come out? Aren't you surprised? I don't understand why witnesses came out after 20 years [at a time] when petitioner is running for Congress," she said.

Government defense

"Isn't that so unnatural? Isn't it so inconsistent with the natural course?" Gutierrez pressed.

According to Devanadera, it was only in August 2006 that the mass grave was found in Sitio Sapang Dako, Inopacan, Leyte, and the complaint was filed when the remains were identified.

Devanadera also said the government had no control over when the witnesses would come out, and added that until the informants spoke up, there was no way for authorities to discover the mass grave.

"We must give them the presumption of regularity," she added.

Possible remand?

Ocampo was accused of ordering the killings of suspected spies within the Communist Party of the Philippines during a party purge in the 1980s.

Ocampo has said he was in prison under martial law at the time the incidents took place and accused the military of putting recycled skeletons in the Leyte grave.

After going into hiding for several days, Ocampo was arrested on March 16 when he surfaced and filed his petition with the Supreme Court questioning the warrant for his arrest and the charges against him. He has since been detained at the Manila Police District.

From their questioning of the government lawyer yesterday, many justices appeared open to remanding Ocampo's case to the regional trial court in Hilongos, Leyte, although Devanadera was adamant that the lawmaker remain under detention.

Reinvestigation

Chief Justice Reynato Puno and Associate Justices Ma. Alicia Austria-Martinez, Romeo Callejo Sr., Leonardo Quisumbing, Minita Chico-Nazario and Cancio Garcia all raised the theory that the original criminal information and arrest warrant against Ocampo be set aside while a reinvestigation was being conducted.

When Devanadera at one point said that Ocampo—who had been imprisoned three times before—had escaped from his military escorts in 1985, Puno asked: "Can you cite something more recent."

Summing up the arguments, Puno cited defects in the criminal information filed against Ocampo and the "probabilities" that could occur if the case went back to the regional court.

One probability was the present case could be withdrawn and 15 separate murder cases filed, instead, against Ocampo.

Among the other defects cited was the inclusion of the elements of treachery and premeditation in the murder charge although this had not been established by the prosecutor.

Another was the use by the prosecution of the affidavit of one witness against Ocampo without informing him that there was such an affidavit.

The finding of probable cause against Ocampo, Puno said, might also have to be determined all over again.

The Chief Justice also said the trial court could also rule that the murder cases had been "absorbed" in the separate rebellion case filed against Ocampo that had remained pending at the Makati Regional Trial Court.

Persecution

Ocampo's counsel Romeo Capulong said he was confident the high court would order the release of his client pending the reinvestigation of the case.

"The court has done this a number of times [in other cases]," Capulong told reporters, adding that he might ask for the transfer of the reinvestigation or the trial of the case to Metro Manila.

Ocampo, for his part, assailed Devanadera's refusal to agree with several justices' proposal that he be allowed to post bail should there be a reinvestigation of his case.

"It only shows that the one really instructing her doesn't want me out of jail. That's why I'm accusing them of persecution," Ocampo said.

Among those who attended the hearing to show support for Ocampo were his wife, Carolina, and reelectionist Sen. Joker Arroyo of the administration ticket and senatorial candidate Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III of the opposition GO slate.

Romulo on Alston report: Without evidence, witnesses

From page A1

Monday. He said he addressed the issue on March 12 in a speech before the council, where he spoke of the measures being undertaken by the Philippine government in terms of human rights.

In that speech, Romulo said the Philippines had abolished the death penalty and that President Macapagal-Arroyo had not allowed the execution or enforcement of the death penalty meted out by the courts and approved by the Supreme Court on heinous crimes.

He said the Supreme Court had created 99 special courts to handle extrajudicial killings, and that under the Constitution, even the unborn child was protected.

Romulo also said the interior and justice departments had been instructed to speed up the investigation of the murders, and that witness protection facilities had been enhanced and strengthened.

He said the government had documented instances where there had been killings, including supposed purges by the Communist Party of the Philippines, and specific charges against certain people, and even formed the Melo Commission to look into the issue.

"What we really have to assess is charges with witnesses and evidence and documents as against charges which are not substantiated. That's an important thing," Romulo said.

He said the UN Human Rights Council was receptive to the Philippines' "itemized" response to Alston's "generalization."

Campaign for 18,000 local posts off …

From page A1

The mayor said the Supreme Court ruled in his favor in 2001, and the Comelec did not bother to entertain the petitioners in 2004.

He said influential persons appeared to be behind the petition for his disqualification.

With Leny Robredo running, the votes for "Robredo" will not come to naught if the petition is upheld this time, the mayor said.

Jesse Robredo was elected mayor of Naga in 1989 and completed his third term in 1998.

After taking leave from politics for three years, he was again elected mayor in 2004.

Zuce

Election fraud witness Michaelangelo Zuce has settled for running for mayor in his little hometown of Malitbog in Bukidnon instead of going head-on against Virgilio Garcillano, his ex-boss and alleged fraud operator of "Hello Garci" fame.

In a phone interview, Zuce said he had no funds to run for Congress, much less counter the "special operations" that, he alleged, Garcillano would engage in to bag Bukidnon's first-district seat.

"My campaign will start after the Holy Week. I've yet to gather enough funds to start," he said, adding that he was now dabbling in "small-time" trading and farming in Malitbog.

According to Zuce, he had to slide down to the mayoralty race because the Genuine Opposition chose to endorse Malou Acosta as its official candidate against Garcillano. (Malou Acosta is the sister of the incumbent representative, Nereus Acosta.)

Zuce filed his certificate of candidacy on Thursday afternoon. As mayoral candidate, he's running alongside Acosta as part of the GO-LP slate in Bukidnon.

Still, Zuce promises to thwart in his own way Garcillano's effort to win a seat in the House, especially because the ex-election commissioner announced that he was running to clear his name.

"It's a pity for the first district of Bukidnon if he wins. He'll just use being its representative to get himself absolved in Congress," Zuce said.

Zuce followed up the "Hello Garci" inquiry in the House with a testimony in the Senate alleging payoffs to election officials before the 2004 polls. He said he was with Garcillano when he witnessed the payoff.

"The network for election fraud is still there. Was there anybody who was removed? Isn't it that they were even promoted," Zuce said.

Andanar

The scourge of dismissed and suspended governors and mayors has left the Department of Interior and Local Government to seek Surigao del Norte's second-district seat.

Erstwhile Interior Undersecretary Wencelito Andanar—he of the trademark Moro cap, sunglasses and bulletproof vest—will be up against his fellow administration ally, incumbent Gov. Robert Lyndon Barbers.

He will run under Kampi, President Macapagal-Arroyo's party, and Barbers, under the ruling Lakas-CMD.

Andanar enjoys the support of Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, the acknowledged leader of Kampi.

Asked if he thought his being the main man in the implementation of orders to sack local officials would be a factor in his candidacy, Andanar said that role had projected him "as a no-nonsense enforcer of the law."

As interior undersecretary for local governance, Andanar oversaw the serving of dismissal orders on local officials in both the administration and the opposition.

Braving barricades, he personally served suspension orders on two opposition leaders—Makati Mayor and United Opposition president Jejomar Binay and dismissed Pasay Mayor Wenceslao Trinidad.

Ampatuan et al.

This early, Lakas candidates in Maguindanao's 22 towns led by Gov. Andal Ampatuan are assured of victory in the May polls.

Ampatuan, widely considered the de facto sultan of Maguindanao, bragged on Thursday that not a single candidate from the opposition wanted to challenge his slate.

Rep. Simeon Datumanong, a former justice and public works secretary who is seeking a fresh mandate under Lakas, said he was lucky to be in the race without an opponent.

"Lakas candidates in Maguindanao are sure winners," said Datumanong, who is Ampatuan's nephew.

Ampatuan said certain politicians had tried to challenge some of his party mates but that he persuaded them not to file their COCs anymore.

He cited the case of South Upi, where ex-Mayor Antonio Gunsi decided to run instead for vice mayor in favor of reelectionist Mayor Abdullah Campong.

The other aspirants for mayor, who withdrew for the "sake of peace and unity," according to provincial administrator Norie Onas, were Datu Guimid Matalam of Datu Paglas, his son Abraham "Kokoy" Matalam of Montawal, and Saidali Makakana of SK Pendatun.

"All other mayoralty candidates in the province are running unopposed," said Onas, who described the situation as "exceptional, and not the product of magic."

He said that no political concessions were given, and that those who withdrew were not paid to do so by Ampatuan, whose sons and other relatives are also running for various posts.

Assunta's Jules

Julio Ledesma IV, who wants to reclaim the seat he held for nine years in Negros Occidental's first district, will be getting a lot of help from his actress-wife Assunta de Rossi.

But Ledesma said his wife was the "icing" on his cake, and not his main weapon against his opponent, reelectionist Rep. Tranquilino Carmona.

He pointed out that while De Rossi was a crowd-drawer, he had made a name for himself long before they were married.

Ledesma, a widower with two children and a scion of a wealthy clan of Negros Occidental, wed De Rossi in civil rites at the sprawling garden of the family estate in San Carlos City in December 2002. They had a church wedding at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park, Makati, in March 2004.

"I won three elections for congressman in 1995, 1998 and 2001 before I met my wife. That she's with me, that's icing, that's frosting. Been there, done that," Ledesma said.

But he took delight in telling reporters that aside from De Rossi, his mother-in-law Nenita and sister-in-law Alessandra, also a movie-TV star, were campaigning for him.

Nenita and Alessandra had earlier expressed dislike for Ledesma and did not attend the couple's civil wedding.

After over four years of marriage, Ledesma said he and De Rossi would work on having a child—after the May 14 elections.

"It's country first, family next," he said with a laugh.

Asked what she would say to convince people to vote for her husband, a Lakas candidate, De Rossi said: "He's cute!"

She also said his track record would speak for itself.

De Leon

Ending weeks of speculation, multiawarded actor Christopher de Leon filed his COC for vice governor of Batangas on Thursday evening.

It was only last month that Batangas Vice Gov. Ricky Recto announced that he had chosen De Leon to be his running mate in his (Recto's) run for the governorship under the GO slate.

The two parted ways when Recto officially gave up his gubernatorial bid in favor of his sister-in-law, Lipa Mayor Vilma Santos.

Recto instead decided to seek Batangas' fourth-district seat. *Reports from Norman Bordadora in Manila; Juan Escandor and Marlon Alexander Luistro, Inquirer Southern Luzon; Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon; Leoncio Balbin Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon; Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas; and Edwin Fernandez and Charlie Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

—

Salceda quits Palace post, runs for governor of Albay

LEGAZPI CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo's chief of staff has quit his post and set his sights on the governorship of Albay.

Joey Salceda, a former representative of Legazpi's second district, filed his certificate of candidacy as an independent candidate on Thursday night. He said he resigned as Ms Arroyo's chief of staff on Tuesday.

The gubernatorial race is now seen as a face-off between Salceda and the incumbent, Fernando Gonzales, who is seeking a second term under the ruling Lakas-CMD.

But two other independent candidates, Stephen Bichara and Abdel Noel Quiapon, are also in the running.

Salceda, Bichara and Gonzales belong to political dynasties.

The governor hails from Ligao City, where his wife, Mayor Linda Gonzales, is also seeking reelection.

Salceda is from Polangui, where his father, Jesus Salceda Sr., is mayor.

Bichara is the brother of former Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara, who is now running for Congress. Their father, Alfonso Bichara, is also a former Albay governor.

Salceda, a former chair of the House committee on appropriations, said he had always felt more comfortable in an elective position.

He said his program "Albay Mabuhay" would center on infrastructure projects such as the construction of the international airport in Daraga, and the provision of PhilHealth and scholarship benefits as well as agricultural livelihood programs.

"I am also thinking of ways to help the poorest barangays in Albay," Salceda said. *Ephraim Aguilar, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

M C E L C O
27 MAR 2007
CITY

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR APPROVAL OF THE RECOVERY OF TRANSMISSION RELAED REVENUES WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-037 RC

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., (ZAMCELCO),
Petitioner,
x-----------------------------------x

Date: MAR 27 2007
By:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on February 13, 2007, Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc., (ZAMCELCO) filed with the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9136 (R.A. 9136) a petition for approval of the recovery of transmission related revenues, with prayer for provisional authority.

In the said petition, ZAMCELCO seeks approval of the net under/over recoveries in the amount of Thirty-Six Million Five Hundred Twenty Thousand Pesos (PhP36,520,000.00) and proposed the following schedule of amounts for recovery from its consumers:

Residential Consumers	PhP 0.5068
Commercial Consumers	0.4876
Public Building Consumers	0.4280
Street Lights Consumers	0.4871
Industrial Large Load Consumers	1.0967
Average rate per kilowatt hour	0.2032

and to refund the regular industrial consumers at PhP1.2072 per kilowatt hour.

The Commission has set the petition for initial hearing and pre-trial conference on **April 16, 2007 (Monday), at three o'clock in the afternoon (3:00 p.m.)** at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City. Evidentiary hearing thereof shall be held at the same venue on **May 21, 2007, (Monday) at nine o'clock in the morning to twelve o'clock noon (9:00 a.m. to 12:00 nn).**

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment htereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address or such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN**, **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, and **JOSE C. REYES** Energy Regulatory Commission, this 20th day of March, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN**
Executive Director

(PDI - March 31, 2007)

Wyeth Salutes World Health Organization Call to Action to Combat Pneumococcal Disease

Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine, 7-valent can help fight number one vaccine-preventable cause of death in young children worldwide

> Locally, PCV-7, also known as the IPD Vaccine, has been included in the childhood immunization schedule as recommended by the Pediatric Infectious Disease Society of the Philippines (PIDSP), the Philippine Pediatric Society (PPS) and the Philippine Foundation for Vaccination (PFV). They recommend the giving of PCV-7 to Filipino children from 6 weeks of age.

Collegeville, Pa. — Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, a division of Wyeth (NYSE: WYE), salutes the World Health Organization's (WHO) decision to support the inclusion of pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV) in national immunization programs worldwide. In view of the demonstrated vaccine efficacy and high disease burden, WHO notes that PCV can help substantially reduce mortality and morbidity. Pneumococcal disease is a significant concern to children's health, estimated by WHO to result in up to 1 million deaths each year in young children around the world.

"Reducing the burden of pneumococcal disease is a vital step toward achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality by two-thirds by 2015," says Bernard Poussot, President, Chief Operating Officer and Vice Chairman, Wyeth. "Broad adoption of the WHO position has the potential to save millions of children's lives around the world. Wyeth is dedicated to doing its part, in collaboration with the GAVI Alliance, other international agencies and local governments, to bring PCV-7 to the world's most vulnerable populations through an affordable and sustainable plan that is reflective of global economic and market conditions."

Wyeth recently applied to WHO for pre-qualification status for PCV-7. If accepted, this status will enable international agencies to include the vaccine in mass immunization programs in the world's least developed countries. The pre-qualification process is expected to be completed by early 2008.

"To date, Wyeth has invested more than $1 billion in state-of-the-art facilities for the manufacturing of PCV-7 and the development and production of future vaccines," says Jim Connolly, General Manager and Executive Vice President, Wyeth Pharmaceuticals Vaccines Business Unit. "These investments have resulted in a robust supply outlook for PCV-7, which is an essential part in helping to protect both current and future generations against this potentially devastating disease."

Many health authorities already have recognized the importance of protecting infants and young children against pneumococcal disease. PCV-7 is now available in 74 countries and is part of the routine national childhood immunization schedule in 16 of these countries worldwide.

In addition, Wyeth is developing a 13-valent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine that targets additional serotypes. This investigational vaccine currently is undergoing clinical development and potentially would offer broader coverage against pneumococcal disease for both infants and adults.

About Pneumococcal Disease

Pneumococcal disease is caused by the bacterium *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and describes a group of illnesses, including bacteremia/sepsis, meningitis, pneumonia and otitis media. Pneumococcal disease affects both children and adults and, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, is a leading cause of death and illness worldwide. WHO estimates that pneumococcal disease results in up to 1 million deaths each year in young children worldwide. Further, according to WHO, pneumococcal disease is the number one vaccine-preventable cause of death in children less than five years of age worldwide.

Important Safety Information about PCV-7

In clinical trials (n=18,168), the most frequently reported adverse events included injection site reactions, fever (≥38°C/100.4°F), irritability, drowsiness, restless sleep, decreased appetite, vomiting, diarrhea and rash.

Risks are associated with all vaccines, including PCV-7. Hypersensitivity to any vaccine component, including diphtheria toxoid, is a contraindication to its use. PCV-7 does not provide 100 percent protection against vaccine serotypes or protect against non-vaccine serotypes.

Wyeth Pharmaceuticals

Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, a division of Wyeth, has leading products in the areas of women's health care, infectious disease, gastrointestinal health, central nervous system, inflammation, transplantation, hemophilia, oncology, vaccines and nutritional products.

Wyeth is one of the world's largest research-driven pharmaceutical and health care products companies. It is a leader in the discovery, development, manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceuticals, vaccines, biotechnology products and non-prescription medicines that improve the quality of life for people worldwide. The Company's major divisions include Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Wyeth Consumer Healthcare and Fort Dodge Animal Health.

ADVT

ISSN
0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 22 No. 113
OPINION
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Website: www.inquirer.net/opinion
Text us your feedback: inquirer opi name/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)
The Philippine Daily Inquirer, Inc. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.
•Subscription Hotline 896-6000

Unfinished business

EDITORIAL

FOR ONCE THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN seems to be moving swiftly against officials who are accused of plunder. On Thursday, Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez ordered the immediate suspension of Mayors Thadeo Ouano of Mandaue City and Arturo Radaza of Lapulapu City, eight of their subordinates and nine top officials of the regional office of the Department of Public Works and Highways in Cebu. The order came six days after the Visayas Ombudsman charged the two mayors and the 17 other officials with plunder, graft, dishonesty and grave misconduct in connection with the installation of P365.8 million worth of lampposts, which graft investigators found to have been grossly overpriced.

The 1,800 lampposts, which were installed along the "ceremonial route" used by the heads of state and delegates to the 12th Asean Summit last January, were found to have been overpriced by almost 10 times. For instance, in Mandaue, the single arm poles were priced at P72,500 each, but import documents showed that each of them cost only P7,536. The most expensive triple-arm posts were passed off at P95,000 each, when their actual cost was only P9,523 each.

The overpricing in the installation of the lampposts was just as astronomical, sending the total cost of the lampposts between P83,000 and P224,000 each. And in an amazing demonstration of recklessness or confidence that the anomaly wouldn't be discovered, the officials involved didn't even bother to compare the costs with those in Cebu City, where the same lampposts were installed for the same event at about the same time. In Cebu, for instance, the cost of electrical works for the apex-like lampposts was P8,500 each, the civil works cost P5,500 and indirect costs amounted to P19,250—or a total of P33,250. In Mandaue, the cost of electrical works was P54,511, civil works amounted to P61,353 and indirect costs reached P58,630—or a total of P174,494. It is clear as daylight that the government was defrauded of tens—possibly hundreds—of millions of pesos in this street-lighting project.

But if proof is further needed of a conspiracy to cheat the government, one needs only to look at the bids submitted by the winning contractors, Fabmik and Gampik Construction, showing the same costs as those contained in the program of work prepared by the government offices involved. The chief investigator of the Ombudsman Visayas, Rod Blazo, pointed out that the program of work of the city government of Mandaue was the same as the bid proposal submitted by Fabmik. Gutierrez herself said she found "strong evidence" against the officials based on the documents showing the "glaring difference" between the prices they "quoted" and the actual costs of the project.

The Office of the Ombudsman certainly did well in investigating the case and suspending the officials with dispatch. But its task is not yet over. In fact, the investigation itself is far from complete, and investigators will have to cast a wider net to catch everyone involved in the scam. The accused local officials have not only been protesting their innocence, they have also said if there was any anomaly, then some national government officials were behind it. "They (investigators) are blaming us for a national government project," one Mandaue official complained.

They have a point, even if it is not what they want to drive home. In a scandal of this magnitude, it's hard to believe that only the officials in the lower rungs of the bureaucracy got their hands dirty. The funds for the project was provided and approved by the DPWH. If money changed hands, could the approving authorities have been left empty-handed?

At the very least, the DPWH should explain how such a scam could have been carried out without responsible officials suspecting it. Did nobody higher than the DPWH regional director ever wonder how a mere street-lighting project could cost P365.8 million? It doesn't take a rocket scientist to know that with that kind of budget, each of the 1,800 lampposts would cost more than P200,000. Or is that the standard cost of lampposts nowadays?

Neither should it take a supersleuth to find where the trail of corruption leads in this case. Unless somebody stops him in his track.

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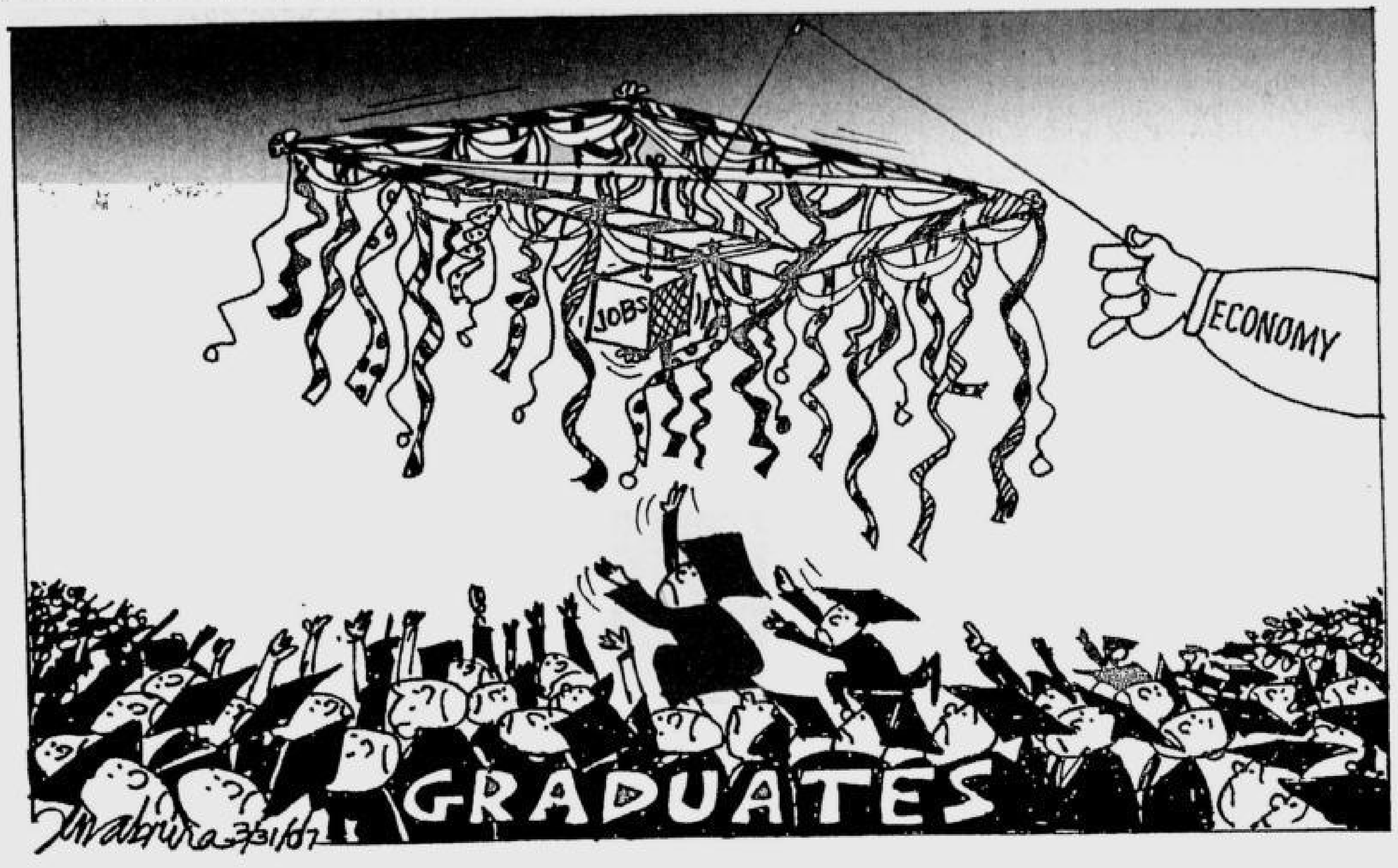


The true state of the nation

SEPARATE OPINION

Isagani A. Cruz

WHEN I LOOK AROUND ME IN THE ELITE areas of the political units comprising Metro Manila, I can't avoid being amazed and impressed by the magnificent physical improvements we have achieved during the past several decades after the ordeal and stagnation of martial law.

To the casual observer, and certainly the gawking tourist, the towering new buildings glimmering in the sun, the infrastructures criss-crossing the busy traffic, the many commercial shops cheerfully selling all kinds of wares from expensive jewelry to pirated DVDs, the thousands of vehicles from the air-conditioned SUVs to the ubiquitous jeepneys—all of these symbolize the tremendous progress of the country despite the many problems confronting our people.

I remember the time I visited Australia in 1971 and a friendly stranger said to me without offense, "I'd like to know more about your country and intend to visit it some day. Do you have TV in the Philippines?"

I was happy for the opportunity to give him a brief but proud report about our land and told him we were among the most advanced countries in Asia, with a viable democracy, a flourishing economy, the highest literacy rate in the whole continent, a hip-hop young generation sporting bell-bottom pants and miniskirts, and yes, of course, several television stations offering mostly American programs in addition to the local shows.

But that glowing report was good only up to Sept. 21, 1972, when the direction of the country turned the other way under Ferdinand Marcos and his accomplices in the AFP—now cynically understood as the Armed Forces of the President. Our once respected country rose to the top but only among the most corrupt governments in Asia and dropped to the bottom as the least developed, with fertile farm lands fallowing, factories closing and foreign investors leaving for our neighboring countries that had before looked up to us as their envied model.

The worst consequence of the Marcos dictatorship was the exploitation and demoralization of the people. The shibboleths of republicanism disappeared in the forbidding shadow of the KBL. The Constitution was defaced and desecrated. Human rights were debased, and enemies of the new regime were imprisoned, murdered, disappeared and otherwise terrorized. Entertainers in general became the toadying drumbeaters of the dictator and his confederates as they embezzled the nation's wealth and deposited it in secret Swiss bank accounts.

The poor to whom Marcos had promised a belated redemption from the injustices of the past were the most afflicted. They became poorer and have remained so to date mainly because of the depredations of the untouchable despot and his still unpunished henchmen. Many of those who oppressed and robbed the people before are still oppressing and robbing them now as reinvented innocent leaders under the present government. Some of them are running in the coming elections and are likely to win with the paid support of the deceived but indulgent voters.

So how are those abandoned derelicts of social justice faring now after the villainies foisted on them by the departed Marcos and his still arrogant accomplices who continue to lord it over in the supposedly sanitized pinnacles of power? Are the victims freer and richer today, released at last from the misery of the past that has imprisoned their hopes for a better future? Have they won at last the "music and the dream" of the small plot of earth promised them by the mendacious government or the decent status of the factory worker as an equal partner of the industrialist in their common struggle for a more prosperous country?

The gleaming skyscrapers in the exclusive precincts of the rich and famous are a false description of the State of the Nation airbrushed by the President of the Philippines every year. The classy condominiums and the swimming pools and tennis courts in the estates of the rich and famous belie the ugliness of the slums along the railroad tracks. The fancy restaurants, the fashion salons and the BMWs along millionaires' row are a mere façade. They do not reveal the utter hopelessness of the millions of our people who barely exist without the joy of living and cannot enjoy the beauty of the sunset as they search for the lamp to light their lives as the darkness closes in.

And so, let not our leaders gloat with their accustomed duplicity that all is great with the Philippine Republic as the centers of power and affluence in Metro Manila vividly suggest. We are rich in ostentation but braggadocio cannot feed the millions of our starving people. We cannot close our eyes to the hovels in the deprived communities, the threadbare public schools and the congested jails, the medicines the patients in charity hospitals have to beg to stay alive, the crooked politicians buying public office as a clandestine investment for future or continued graft. These and other dark auguries reveal to us the true and sad state of the desperate Filipino nation.

The Lucifer Effect and ordinary heroes

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

I FIRST READ ABOUT THE 1971 STANFORD Prison Experiment (SPE) about seven years ago in Malcolm Gladwell's best-selling "The Tipping Point...How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference." Gladwell cited the SPE among several examples of what he calls the Power of Context: that people are more sensitive to their environment than they may seem, or that what guides people's actions are not so much their thoughts and convictions but the immediate context of their behavior.

SPE was a landmark study by Stanford psychologist Philip Zimbardo, whose team randomly assigned healthy, normal, intelligent college students to play the roles of prisoner or guard in a projected two-week study. After six weeks, Zimbardo had to terminate the project because it went out of control, with the "guards" transformed into sadists (at best uncaring) and the "prisoners" breaking down emotionally or cowed into abject submission.

Now Zimbardo, a professor emeritus at Stanford, has come out with his own bestseller titled "The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil"—in which he describes the SPE in complete detail (including how he was carried away into behaving like a prison superintendent rather than as a research psychologist) and uses his findings from that study to explain what makes good people do bad things, how moral people can be seduced to act immorally, where the line is that separates good from evil, and who is in danger of crossing it. He then applies his theories to understand some of the worst historical examples of man's inhumanity to man—i.e., the Inquisition, the Rwanda massacre, the rape of Nanking and, more recently, the abuse and torture of prisoners in Iraq's infamous Abu Ghraib prison.

What is his explanation for these phenomena? In a nutshell, he, like Gladwell, finds that the right "situational" forces and group dynamics can work in concert to lead decent men and women to abandon their moral scruples and cooperate in oppression and violence—bringing out the worst in them. Thus, the Lucifer Effect. And it is not as if these situational forces are of an extraordinary nature: wearing a uniform, or dressing in ways that conceal identity (e.g., hooded robes like the Klu Klux Klan, or ski-masks and bonnets, which our military and police seem to go for), or being in a group where acceptance is vital to self-image are sufficient to trigger the Jekyll-Hyde transformation.

Even more troubling is his finding from several studies—that no one is really exempt. Even if you are a "good apple," being in a "bad barrel" will corrupt you. The line between good and evil is permeable.

Thus, he talks about "the banality of evil"—every man's and every woman's potential for engaging in evil deeds despite their generally moral upbringing that would make such acts otherwise unthinkable. And he also introduces the "evil of inaction" as a new form of evil that supports its perpetrators, by knowing but not acting to challenge them. Which means, of course, that so-called men of goodwill who do nothing, and therefore allow evil to triumph, are themselves exhibiting a form of evil.

Reading Zimbardo, one cannot help but look at what is happening in the Philippines from a Lucifer Effect perspective. Where one is figuratively bombarded daily with stories, if not personal experiences, of government and corporate malfeasance and corruption, of military and police cruelty or indifference, there is a tendency to go with the flow, as it were—to conform, submit, yield, comply, accept, no matter how good our intentions. The Lucifer Effect, the banality of evil. And as in the case of abused children who in turn become abusive parents, we perpetuate that evil.

The prison consultant in the SPE found himself, in his role as head of the "parole board," acting in exactly the same cruel and inhuman way his parole board officer had acted toward him during the 16 years he himself was in prison.

Does that mean that good apples don't have a chance when they wind up in a bad barrel? Not at all. Zimbardo argues that not only are we capable of resisting evil, but that we can even teach ourselves to act heroically. Most everyone is doing the bidding of unjust authorities? Most everyone is bending to the will of corrupt systems? We can resist—we can be heroes. Not the superheroes of the Mahatma Gandhi-Nelson Mandela type, but ordinary, everyday heroes—those who do what needs to be done (like whistle-blowing). Just as there is the "banality of evil," there is also the "banality of heroism."

How can we achieve this? Zimbardo gives us some tips on how to defy the Lucifer Effect, that is to say, how to refuse to participate in or condone wrongdoing: **Be aware**—don't just be on automatic pilot; engage in critical thinking (ask questions about what is going on, and how it will impact if we follow the prescribed path; develop the personal hardiness to be "different" or "difficult"—by learning how to say no) at the risk of being accused of "*walang pakikisama*"; be willing to admit our own mistakes; and, what may be the hardest of all—be willing to risk losing our job by exposing fraud, deception or incorrectness.

In sum: being an ordinary hero, defying the Lucifer Effect is doing the right thing when it is much easier to do the wrong thing or to keep quiet.

Do we have the stuff of which ordinary heroes are made of? If so, there is hope.

Conchitina's book: a must for diplomats and spouses

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

FOREIGN SECRETARY ALBERTO ROMULO WAS guest speaker recently at the launch of Conchitina Sevilla-Bernardo's book, "Being Truly Filipino: Personal Expressions of an Identity." Romulo said that it should be "must reading" for everyone in the diplomatic service. I might add that the book should be must reading, too, for anyone involved in projecting a good Filipino image abroad, like the executives of multinational companies, NGOs and agencies of the United Nations. For instance, it gives some don't's, like never put ice on your brandy or red wine, or use paper napkins at formal dinners.

In his speech, Romulo added another don't (given to him as a young student in Madrid by his uncle, the late former Foreign Secretary Carlos P. Romulo): never put your hands in your pocket at a diplomatic reception. Ironically, Romulo recalled, a few weeks later, he saw a photo of then US President Richard Nixon at one such function, with one hand in his pocket. He said he didn't have the guts to show that photo to CPR, but had he done so, CPR would doubtless have argued, "Well, you're not the president of the US."

* * *

Conchitina's book, which details her life in the past six years as wife of our ambassador to Madrid, Joseph Delano Bernardo, is the crystallization of her sensitivity to the task of showcasing the best of our country (of which she's very proud) in a foreign post. As a coffee-table book, it handsomely shows off RP furniture and décor at the ambassador's residence; the hostess' Pinoy-style table settings; culinary endeavors; and Filipiniana wardrobe. I like especially the feature on the creative Pinoy table settings by various distinguished ladies, with their favorite local recipes thrown in.

There's also a lot of historical and cultural insights into the Hispanization of RP, gathered by Conchitina in part through informal research in museums and convents of various religious orders in Spain, where she marveled at the incredible wealth of material about our country.

* * *

There are also many fascinating first-person accounts of events and the personages encountered during their tour of duty, such as the pomp and pageantry that marks the ambassador's presentation of credentials to the King of Spain, and the famed graciousness of Queen Sophia. The book also features photos of former Philippine ambassadors presenting their credentials to Generalissimo Francisco Franco and later King Juan Carlos. I especially liked the photo of a rather girlish Isabel Caro Wilson, who served as ambassador during the Ramos presidency, chatting animatedly with the Spanish king as Foreign Minister Joaquin Solana, now one of the top leaders of the European Union, listened amusedly. There are also details of President Macapagal-Arroyo's official visit to Spain in June last year. (She's scheduled to make a state visit to Spain this December, and should this happen she'd be the first President to do so after her father Diosdado Macapagal.)

* * *

Romulo recalled CPR saying: "An ambassador without a wife is like an eagle with clipped wings. He cannot fly, he cannot soar." That presupposes, though, that the envoy's spouse knows the rudiments of entertaining, which is, perhaps, 70 percent of an envoy's job. The foreign service tries to be picky about its ambassadors, but it can only gamble on the spouses. Conchitina, who founded the Karilagan Finishing School and who edited "All About Élan" in the INQUIRER for over seven years is eminently qualified. Her earlier two books about social graces remain must reading for personality development courses.

A popular fashion model in her salad days, she had an all-too-brief brief stint in politics as vice mayor of Jejomar Binay. Their tandem was dubbed "beauty and the beast," but she ended up prematurely quitting, unable to take the corruption in city hall. This beauty and brains is a role model for the distaff side of RP diplomacy.

* * *

Last Thursday, Erda Vocational-Technical High School (Erda Tech) graduated 75 students from a five-year academic-technical high school. These students from the poorest families in Metro Manila enjoyed full scholarships for five years. The biggest groups trained in food technology, automotive servicing and computer data entry courses. All the graduates spent their fifth year in in-plant training in various partner-companies.

Erda Tech was founded by Fr. Pierre Tritz in the mid-1990s in response to the country's industrialization needs. The advantage of its technical training is that after graduation the students can already seek employment to help their families (many working students take college studies at night). As Fr. Tritz likes to point out, it is only through education and training that the very poor can break the cycle of poverty that has gripped their families for generations.

Erda Tech and its parent, Erda Foundation, which supports 30,000 schoolchildren in the lower levels of school, are in need of financial donations to keep the scholars from very poor families in school and give them a better future through training and education. But the two schools are also badly in need of computer hardware, such as Pentium 3 units and color monitors. They are appealing for donations of second-hand computer equipment from banks and corporations that are upgrading their computer systems. Call Fr. Tritz or Weng Martinez at 564-1856 and 564-2608.

* * *

Ace photographer Mandy Navasero, who conducts a regular photography class every summer, is inviting participants to join her students on two separate trips to the fabled islands of Batanes, from April 12 to 15 or May 6 to 10. She guarantees an unforgettable experience. Call Mandy at 899-1767 or 896-3208, e-mail: mandynavasero@yahoo.com, or visit her studio at LRI Business Plaza, 210 Nicanor Garcia St., Bel-Air II, Makati City.

Two quixotic underdogs

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

MEET TWO MEN WHO DON'T SEEM AFRAID OF the most daunting challenges and the most discouraging odds.

The two men are meeting head-on the challenge of providing voters—in Pampanga and Camarines Sur—a choice, at the very least, of candidates. In the second district of Pampanga and the first district of Camarines Sur, it seems that the political powers have decreed that the congressional seats are the birthright of two young men—the sons of the President, Mikey and Dato Arroyo. But, believing that political positions are not "gifts" to be handed on silver platters to people with no other qualification than a blood line,. two men are bucking the odds and have decided to run against the two scions of the presidential family.

Read on about them.

* * *

THE FIRST of these men is an "interventionist cardiologist" with an active practice in St. Luke's Hospital and the Philippine Heart Center.

But for Dr. Joey Montemayor, 45, who filed his certificate of candidacy for congressman in the second district of Pampanga, his decision to run is not the result of "a personal battle," but rather the offshoot of his desire to provide Kapampangans "true representation" in the House, as well as part of the larger battle "against the corrupt GMA government."

Running under the Liberal Party, Montemayor says that compared to Mikey (the failed actor wannabe son of the President), he is far more qualified to represent the people of Pampanga. "Mikey cannot even speak Kapampangan!" he exclaims in disgust. While the President's son grew up in Metro Manila and studied in elite schools, Montemayor says he spent his elementary and high school years in his hometown of Sasmuan and in Guagua. And aside from his medical degree, Montemayor says he also studied law at the UST, and holds an MBA from the UP.

"I think I am fully armed with the leadership capabilities and management expertise needed of a congressman," he says.

In contrast, Montemayor cites Mikey's lackluster performance in Congress and the scarcity of bills he has filed, much less shepherded through Congress. "He was too busy defending himself and his mother from the *jueteng* payola accusations to the impeachment." And only lately have projects "sponsored" by Mikey 'been seen, "since people had been complaining that he wasn't even spending his CDF in the district."

This is not Montemayor's first foray into politics. In 1998, he ran against action star Lito Lapid for governor of Pampanga, under the People's Reform Party. Married, with two children, the cardiologist knows he is the decided underdog in this "*mano-a-mano*" electoral brawl (as of 10 p.m. Thursday, his lawyer says no one else had filed his or her candidacy for the district). But, he declares: "If the people will guard their votes, I'm sure their true sentiments will be revealed and their real preference will emerge."

* * *

THE OTHER political "Don Quixote" tilting at windmills—and my, what formidable windmills these are!—is Sabas Mabulo, known to friends as "Abang," who is making the big leap from local politics (as councilor and mayor) to national, as congressman of Camarines Sur's first district.

In a piece titled "Against All Odds," Mabulo recalls that last year the "three political kingpins" of the province—Reps. Luis Villafuerte, Felix Alfelor and Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya—"forged an alliance," with the "once rivals now comrades" endorsing the candidacy of Dato Arroyo. "Any decision to (do) battle (with) them was like banging one's head against a brick wall—in short, committing political suicide," Mabulo acknowledges.

While their backing of the President's youngest son would seem an insurmountable obstacle, Mabulo says "not everybody welcomed the idea with (an) open heart" and some questioned why Dato was running in the first district in the first place, what the three "kingpins" were getting in exchange for their support, and whether no other politician in the region was capable of mounting a challenge to the young Arroyo, who would virtually walk into a reserved Congressional seat.

In disgust over this development, Mabulo says a core group of NGO representatives, people's organizations, academics, business and church leaders invited him to a meeting and proposed a most foolish, idealistic idea: that Mabulo challenge the combined might of the three "kingpins" and of Malacañang by running for the first district and thereby not allowing Dato to run unopposed.

"I left the meeting in a state of awe as mixed emotions engulfed my being. I felt elated at the same time fearful, why a simple man like me … (would go for) an unmatched fight in a bigger arena."

Despite his misgivings—and he is right to nurse so many of them—Mabulo has decided to take up the challenge. "Despite the fears and (feelings of) unworthiness, I constantly remind myself that they may have the finest arms, the support of the strongest political party, countless resources … (but) I am confident that I will give them a good fight because I have the most powerful campaign manager … God is with me expressed through the countless people who encouraged and expressed support."

* * *

"BAYLE Pinay!: Sisterhood and Dancing for Abanse! Pinay in Congress" reels off at 6 p.m. on Monday, April 16, at the Teatrino Promenade, Greenhills Shopping Center.

Tickets to this fund-raising for Abanse! Pinay are available at P1,000 each. A ticket-holder is entitled to a sumptuous dinner, bottomless iced tea and limitless dancing with DI's who're experts in every type of ballroom dance, except perhaps the Cha-cha.

For ticket inquiries and deliveries, please call: 0920-9065852 (Elma) and 0918-927-1534 (Monet).

Many laws, little justice in China

WORLD VIEW

Nicholas Bequelin

THE IMAGE ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN is shocking: a man lying on a hospital bed, his head bandaged, with long trickles of blood running from the top of his scalp. The man explains with a bit of understatement: "Of course, I must continue to have faith in the Chinese legal system, although I must admit that this incident has somewhat dampened my optimism."

The "incident" occurred last December, as he and another lawyer were traveling to handle the re-trial of a blind, self-taught legal activist. The activist had been framed after he denounced the abuses by the local family planning authorities. While the lawyers were inside a bus, a gang of men brutally assaulted them with pipes.

The injuries proved minor, but the incident embodies the paradox of China's legal system: over the past two decades, China has enacted hundreds of laws and elevated "ruling the country according to law" to ideological and constitutional prominence. Legal awareness in society has soared to unprecedented levels. Last week, China finally enshrined private property by passing the long-awaited property rights law, in what the government called "significant progress in promoting rule of law in the country."

Yet access to justice remains tightly constrained. Courts are still controlled by the Communist Party of China (CPC), and lawyers involved in litigation against local state agencies are highly vulnerable to retaliation by state and non-state actors. The reprisals range from suspension of lawyers' licenses to physical intimidation or assault.

After their attackers left, the lawyers repeatedly called the police to report the incident, but the police did nothing beyond take the call. Formal complaints to the justice ministry and the national bar association weren't acknowledged, let alone answered.

Ever since Deng Xiaoping ushered in the "reform and opening" era in 1978, the Chinese leadership has seen the legal system as an instrument to carry out state policies. But as China's society progressively emancipated itself from direct state control—with the notable exception of sectors viewed by the CPC as crucial to maintaining its monopoly on power—citizens increasingly appealed to the law for protection against arbitrary administrative interference. In turn, as a way to ensure social stability, check petty corruption, and channel social grievances through a party-controlled mechanism, the government encouraged the idea that ordinary citizens had legal rights.

The new property rights law undoubtedly offers stronger protection to Chinese citizens, in particular homeowners. Greater predictability and clarity in the property system are likely to bring economic benefits, reassure international investors, and signal the leadership's determination to pursue further economic reforms. Perhaps more importantly, the law indirectly consolidates, at least in theory, the concept of a private sphere in Chinese society: a physical and legal area protected from arbitrary state intervention that could potentially serve as a basis for demanding greater political participation.

What the new law will not do, however, is address the most serious property rights disputes: land seizures and forced evictions for urban redevelopment. Most of these protests stem from acts by local officials—acts already clearly illegal under existing Chinese law.

With little oversight from the central government, and no independent judiciary or a free press to hold them accountable, local authorities in rural areas are often a law unto themselves. According to China's Ministry of Land Resources, there were more than 90,000 cases of illegal land transfers last year, yet there were precious few prosecutions.

Local courts, whose judges are appointed and paid by the local governments, often simply refuse to file cases that challenge official decisions. In the few cases where a court rules in favor of the plaintiffs, the judgments often remain unenforced. When helping villagers or evicted residents to fight through the legal system, lawyers and legal activists often become victims of retaliation.

Because people cannot get justice through the courts, unrest has skyrocketed nationwide in recent years: official statistics record more than 200 protests a day, four times the number a decade ago. The central authorities have recognized the link between abuses, unrest, and the need to develop legal services to prevent the escalation of disputes. Wen Jiabao, China's premier, acknowledged last year that protests in the countryside were caused by "some localities … unlawfully occupying farmers' land"; he promised "effective legal services and legal aid" to help people who have difficulty filing lawsuits.

But reality doesn't match official rhetoric. In the past year, three prominent lawyers and rights activists were arrested. Administrative restrictions on lawyers were tightened to discourage class action or multiple plaintiff suits—typically cases against arbitrary or corrupt government actions—and to facilitate local authorities' intervention and control over cases. And the media were prohibited from reporting cases involving land disputes and forced evictions.

The new property law won't be the breakthrough for rights protection that the government claims it is, until it is matched by increased access to justice for ordinary citizens. The government is fortunate to have my lawyer friend's faith in the legal system, but now it must earn the ordinary citizens' trust by enacting reforms. Removing constraints on lawyers and ensuring that they are not attacked with impunity would be a good place to start.

Project Syndicate

Nicholas Bequelin is China researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Inspiring

YOUNG BLOOD

Jessica Marie Robredo

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I WAS ONLY 12 YEARS OLD IN AUGUST 2000 WHEN JESSE Manalastas Robredo was proclaimed as the Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Government Service. I was a witness to how honored the man felt with the recognition given to him. But it was not until I was asked by my English teacher to go over the list of past and present Ramon Magsaysay awardees and write an essay on one of them that that I was able to fully understand the great significance of the award. The awardees, I quickly learned, were exceptional men and women who bravely dared to make a difference in making Asia, and maybe the world, a better place.

It was easy for me to pick Jesse Robredo from the list of 229 awardees because he is one person who has truly inspired me and continues to inspire me to make a difference. To write about his life and his work, however, is a very daunting task, because he is very close to my heart.

Much has been written about his outstanding work as mayor of Naga City from 1988 to 1998 and how he bravely fought corruption, vice, poverty, economic stagnation and dramatically transformed Naga from an inefficient and dispirited city into one of the country's most progressive. When the euphoria brought about by the Edsa Revolution started to wane and people were starting to doubt if a more authoritarian leadership would work better for the Filipino people, Robredo showed us all that the people are still the most important resource and restored our faith in democracy. He not only worked for the poor but worked with them and involved them every step of the way. He has always pushed for growth with equity, transparency, integrity and he brought honor to his office. But the most essential part of his accomplishments are those that are invisible to the naked eye.

I am 15, but I must admit that to this day, the lessons of democracy, of fiscal management, of people empowerment, are still quite difficult for me to comprehend. What I do understand is that the people of Naga look up to him because he succeeded in making them feel he is just like any one of them. He is simple and humble in his ways. He wears the city government uniform to work. He is in his office before eight o'clock in the morning. He goes around without bodyguards, and he does not believe he is entitled to special perks just because of his office. He lives very modestly as his house and office would reveal.

He is a very dedicated public servant and practices what he preaches. No task is ever too menial for him, whether it is driving around the city at night to check busted lampposts or joining street cleaners and garbage collectors in performing their regular chores.

People see the best in him during the worst of times. He is always the last man on the street during typhoons, making sure that people are safe, and the first one to shovel the mud out of the city after the floods.

In 1998, after serving his third consecutive term as mayor of the city, he stepped down quietly, ignoring suggestions for him to seek higher office or perpetuate himself in power by asking a family member to run in his stead.

Now that I know what the Ramon Magsaysay Award is all about, I feel truly blessed that I happen to be his daughter. I was born exactly six days before he was first elected mayor and I spent the first 10 years of my life with him at City Hall.

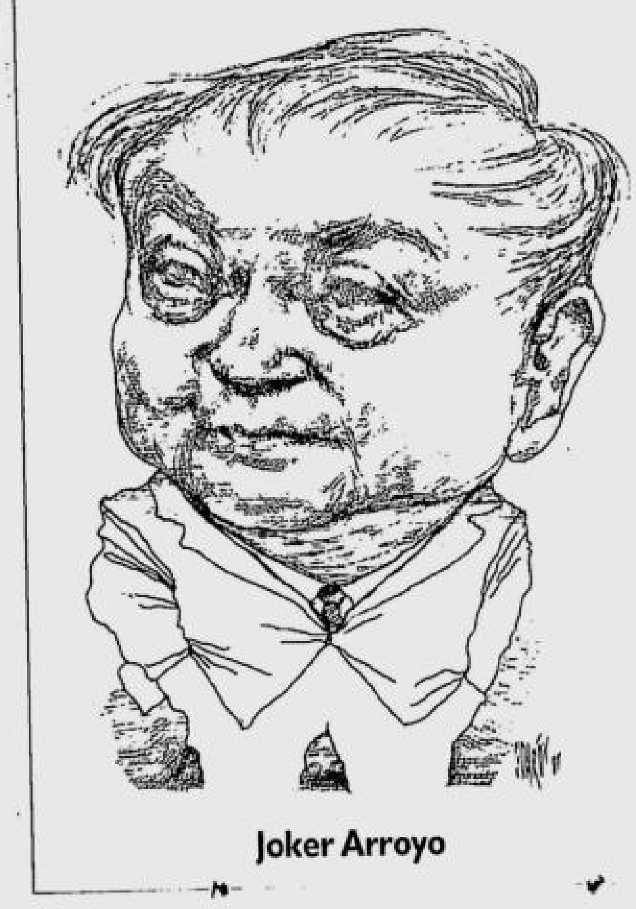
If there was one thing that convinced me that he is truly deserving of the award, it is this: He has never made me feel I was different from others just because he is my father. As he goes about serving others, I have never been left wanting for his time and attention. He eats lunch and dinner with us seven days a week, even if it means he has to take two or three more meals because he has to attend a constituent's wedding or birthday reception. No occasion is too trivial for him. He is there for us not only during PTA meetings or piano or ballet recitals, but even when my math homework gets a little too difficult.

Now that I am a little older, sometimes people would come up to me to tell me what great things my father has done for them. I feel proud. But what puts a smile in my heart is knowing that he also did small things for some people—things like bringing back a wayward son to his distraught mother, helping a male employee patch things up with his wife, or playing basketball on a street corner with the neighborhood kids. Such things may appear inconsequential, but they have brought great joy to others and made them feel important.

His decision to continue serving his native city and resist the lure of national prominence, which a higher elective post could have brought him, had the deepest impact on me and imparted to me life-long lessons: that no deed is too small nor too big if it makes other people's burden lighter and their lives better; that greatness of spirit can be achieved not through wealth, power or popularity but by living your life with quiet dignity and by becoming a man for others. By his example, I have been truly inspired to dare to make a difference, break ground, stand up for my own convictions and serve others selflessly and with integrity in whatever field I will find myself in.

Jessica Marie Robredo, 15, is a high school student at the Universidad de Sta. Isabel in Naga City. This essay was the winner of the Grand Prize for the high school category of the 2003 Ramon Magsaysay Student Essay Competition.

IN THE NEWS



Joker Arroyo

It's clear OFWs can't depend on gov't

I AM A FILIPINO LIVING IN THE UNITED States. I was disheartened when I saw on New York TV that the Filipino nurses who made headlines by courageously fighting back against their abusive recruiter/employer (Sentosa Health Care) are now the ones being haled to court on charges of abandoning and endangering patients under their care.

What made the newscast disgusting was that it was one-sided. It reported that the patients were chronically ill children, and that the nurses quit because they wanted more money. The prosecutor who was interviewed portrayed the nurses as irresponsible and greedy. Nothing was mentioned about the subhuman living and working conditions these nurses suffered because of their employer's insensitivity. These nurses are fighting a losing cause since their employer knows influential people in New York, among them an influential senator.

I would love to see our politicians in the Philippines helping them and doing something to prevent a similar situation happening to other Filipinos. I would love to see the candidates in the May elections to include OFW welfare in their campaign platforms. I know this is wishful thinking.

I guess we overseas Filipino workers should accept the reality that while our government depends so much on our remittances, we cannot depend on our government.

—DENNIS DY,
dennisdy2004@yahoo.com

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CEBU PACIFIC
It's time everyone flies.

A lonely cry in the wilderness

CONRADO DE QUIROS is a Jose Rizal of our time. Thank Nature, there are still people like him who are after the truth. If only we Filipinos feel the "knife of betrayal," then we would be a better people and a better country.

Our government never wanted justice, never wanted the truth. And many of us just play blind to the poverty that surrounds and plagues us because of the widespread corruption in government.

Our nation is sinking in a quicksand, and the weight of corruption is sinking us deeper. Worst of all, we are shouting but no one dares to listen, no one dares to help.

—VIVEN IMMANUEL DULATAS,
viven_jah7@yahoo.com

Balaoan now a peaceful town

WE WOULD LIKE TO REACT TO the news item, titled "8 areas in Ilocos under PNP watch" (INQUIRER, 2/26/07), which mentioned Balaoan as the only town in La Union declared an election area of immediate concern by Chief Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, the regional PNP head, due to past incidents of election-related violence.

We are deeply saddened by the report, considering the breakthroughs made in the peace and order campaign initiated by the present administration of Mayor Joaquin Ostrea Jr. from the time he first assumed stewardship of the town in 1998 up to the present. Nonetheless, we thank the PNP for showing great interest in our town as it seeks to maintain peace and order in the region in the run-up to the May 14, 2007 elections.

We acknowledge that, indeed, there had been dark periods in the history of our town, when it was once among the political hotbeds in the north, if not in the whole country, during election seasons; but, that is now a thing of the past.

After Mayor Ostrea took over in 1998, there had been a remarkable turnaround in the peace and order situation in our town, more particularly during election time. Admittedly, this would not have happened, if not for the strong resolve of the local administration to lick this problem by "strongly partnering with the police leadership" here and "extending the olive branch to erstwhile political opponents." In the last elections, when the PNP sent additional police personnel to the more critical towns in the province, it did not see the need to beef up its presence here. This was an indication that our town has become a peaceful and safe place.

We would like to impress upon INQUIRER readers and the public in general that "we genuinely value peace and order." We have labored hard over the years to bring back stability and serenity to our humble place. To show how sincere this commitment is, we have even adopted the fairer color "pink" as the dominant color in the municipality, thus earning us the title "Pink City of the North" from the media.

We hope that, through your paper, the reading public and the PNP regional command may come to appreciate the efforts that we are doing here as far as peace and order is concerned and broaden their knowledge about our town.

—RALEIGH P. DOMONDON,
municipal administrator,
Office of the Mayor,
Municipality of Balaoan,
Province of La Union

BWS showing among Filipinos

DO WE TRULY DESERVE THE rampant corruption taking place in national and local governments, the unprecedented P11-billion pork barrel allocation and other irregularities, plus the messianic complex called political dynasties, in the face of the hand-to-mouth existence of one out of every five Filipinos (SWS survey) and the deteriorating quality of our education and environment?

Filipinos are collectively exhibiting symptoms similar to those indicative of abused partners or the battered wife syndrome (BWS)—a general feeling of helplessness, low self-esteem, anger, anxiety and lack of power and choice to craft one's future. Yet, there are tools for genuine empowerment and they are found in our Constitution and our laws.

We do not need to change the Charter—or wait for regular elections, where guns, goons, gold and ghosts prevail—to assert our powers and rights as a sovereign people.

—GLORIA ESTENZO RAMOS,
gollyramos@yahoo.com

FVR not to blame for Mindanao's woes

I REFER TO NORALYN MUSTAFA'S MARCH 5 column, wherein she concluded that former Presidents Fidel V. Ramos and Corazon Aquino, including National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales, caused "all the miseries we Moros are now experiencing" and that the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, which was nothing but "a bill of promises between Ramos and Misuari.... has not made our lives better, only worse."

I do not know where Mustafa is coming from in regard to the Mindanao problem which has been around for more than a century, but we certainly have much to say about the blame she ascribed to the two former presidents. Allow me to bring up a few points:

1. The Ramos administration approached the complex problem of Mindanao on the premise that it can be addressed only through a comprehensive peace and development approach, with calibrated use of law enforcement actions, hands-on civilian management and people's participation. Knowing the Bangsamoro's grievances to be rooted in neglect, underdevelopment and poverty, the Ramos administration addressed those concerns without regard to whether the beneficiaries were rebel enclaves, indigenous communities or Christian barangays.

2. The Final Peace Agreement (FPA) with the MNLF was the product of 47 months of sustained and oftentimes contentious negotiations which started in early 1993. The tedious process was participated in and actively supported by the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) as well as many other heads of state, senior leaders, seasoned diplomats and scholars from other friendly countries who worked hard and unselfishly for the common goal of peace and development in Mindanao.

3. Economic growth and productivity in Mindanao were at their highest in 1994-1998 (even higher than the national average), and Mindanao was then emerging as the gateway to our BIMP-EAGA neighbors. Well before the end of Ramos' term in mid-1998, the implementing structures and various mechanisms of the peace agreement had already been established, and a ceasefire negotiated with the MILF was put into effect in July 1997. With President Joseph Estrada's "all-out war" policy against the rebels, things took a turn for the worse. The subsequent phases of the agreement's implementation did not get the attention they deserved from the succeeding administrations.

4. In his column in the Manila Bulletin, Ramos wrote a three-part series (Aug. 27, Sept. 3 and 10, 2006) focusing on the GRP-MNLF Peace Agreement, revisiting the government's peace efforts of the past two decades and the remaining tasks which our elected leaders and civil society must pursue to win enduring peace and ensure sustainable development. These articles are factual and informative and should give Mustafa and those who lack information, a better insight on the subject. They can be accessed on our website www.rpdev.org.

—FRUMENCIO A. LAGUSTAN,
spokesman of former
President Fidel V. Ramos

Alarming, disturbing COPW position

WE FIND THE ONE-PAGE COPW (CONsumer and Oil Price Watch) advertisement (INQUIRER, 3/15/07) on Open Access and Retail Competition in the Electricity Industry very alarming and disturbing. Although we do not doubt COPW's good intentions, we can't help but be surprised, again, by its call "for the generation sector to first be de-monopolized and an independent IPP Administrator (to) be established in order to ensure fair market competition."

We are alarmed because COPW, known as a consumer advocate in the oil industry, is now reinforcing the very same and longtime position of 140 distribution utilities, led by the giant monopoly Meralco which controls 64 percent of the national market. This position has been the cause of the long-overdue implementation of "open access and retail competition," which promises to lower the cost of electricity.

We are disturbed because this line of argument is not something new. It has, in fact, successfully squeezed its way through the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira). COPW insists that the Private Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) "fast-track" the power industry's privatization in 2007 and 2008 to make way for open access by 2008, and it has proposed measures to attract local and foreign investors to the power sector.

Yet COPW refuses to look at the larger picture and closes its mind to the obvious fact that these investors will not bid for Napocor plants or invest in the construction of new power plants, much less participate in competition, while the market is still closed to suppliers other than the present distributors. Unless guaranteed with a supply contract, investors will be unwilling to enter the market.

—PETE L. ILAGAN,
president, National Association of Electricity
Consumers for Reforms,
10 Bayside Court Compound,
680 Quirino Ave., Tambo, Parañaque City

Who loses if Pacquiao wins in political arena?

UPON THE SUGGESTIONS OF HIS FRIENDS and townmates, boxer Manny Pacquiao is running for congressman of South Cotabato. According to him, he just wants to help the people of South Cotabato in terms of food, medicine and athletic equipment. Apparently, Pacquiao has the best of intentions. However, some people have a different take of his situation.

I, for one, feel that some national politicians merely want to use his tremendous popularity to serve their purely selfish interest. The truth is, his "backers" only know too well that he is not qualified to be a lawmaker, but still they want him to run because he could easily beat the incumbent congresswoman, Darlene Antonino-Custodio of the opposition.

But what happens in the long run? The people of South Cotabato will not have a competent representative. And they will be the losers. So, let us make them realize this early of the irreparable damage they are bound to suffer if their voters commit a big mistake.

Competent against incompetent? Only in the Philippines!

—ARTURO M. TOPACIO JR.,
Dra. Salamanca cor. L. Jaena Sts.,
San Roque, Cavite City 4100

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Mayors' group asks high court to stop polls for cityhood

ILOILO CITY—THE LEAGUE OF Cities of the Philippines (LCP) has filed a petition at the Supreme Court to stop the Commission on Elections from conducting plebiscites in six towns and stop the conversion of these municipalities into cities.

In a petition for prohibition filed on March 27, the LCP asked the High Court to issue a writ of preliminary injunction or temporary restraining order to stop the Comelec from holding the plebiscites in these towns.

The city mayors claimed that the laws converting six towns into cities should instead be nullified because the towns do not meet the income requirements for cityhood.

The cityhood laws will take effect after majority of the voters in each of the six towns approve the conversion through a plebiscite.

The petition, filed by LCP officers led by its president, Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas, named the Comelec and the municipalities of Baybay (Leyte), Bogo (Cebu), Catbalogan (Samar), Tandag (Agusan del Sur), Borongan (Eastern Samar), and Tayabas (Quezon) as respondents.

The towns have become cities after the enactment of Republic Act Nos. 9389, 9390, 9391, 9392, 9394, and 9398. The six cityhood bills lapsed into law after President Macapagal-Arroyo failed to sign them a month after they were submitted to Malacañang last month.

The six are among the 16 towns that sought exemption from the income requirement. Congress has so far approved the cityhood laws of 15 towns despite strong opposition from the LCP.

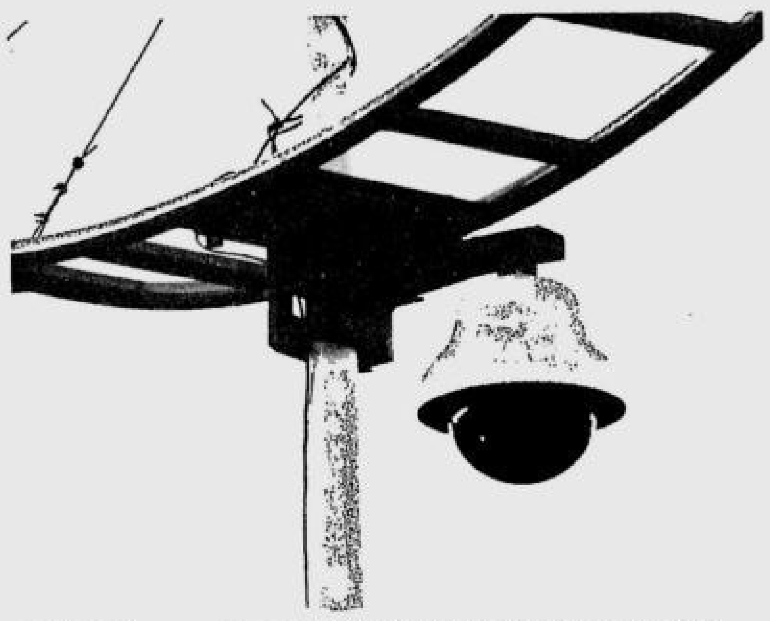
Under the Local Government Code, as amended by Republic Act No. 9009, a town should have a locally generated income of at least P100 million annually before it could be classified into a city. It should also either have a land area of at least 100 square kilometers or a population of 150,000. The six towns have annual local incomes ranging from P62 million to P82 million.

The LCP had said that the conversion of towns into cities that did not meet the income requirements would drastically cut the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) of each city.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. had estimated that each city would lose at least P2 million of their IRA share with the addition of new cities, or a total of around P3.7 billion for the 117 cities. *Nestor Burgos Jr. and David Israel Sinay, Inquirer Visayas*

₱2M per camera for Asean meet? Graft probers smell overprice

By Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas



ONE OF the surveillance cameras installed at the Mandaue City reclamation area.
TONEE DESPOJO/CDN

CEBU CITY—GRAFT INvestigators are also looking into what could be another scam in projects related to the 12th Asean summit held here, this time involving surveillance cameras that could have cost the government at least P2 million each from a total budget of P90 million.

Virginia Palanca-Santiago, acting deputy Ombudsman, said the anti-graft office would look into allegations that the surveillance cameras installed in the cities of Cebu, Lapu-lapu and Mandaue were also overpriced.

The government, through the Department of Public Works and Highways, bought 42 surveillance cameras that were installed in the Asean ceremonial routes—the streets traversed by heads of state and delegates.

At its P90 million price tag, it means that each of the 42 pieces of surveillance cameras cost the government P2.14 million each.

The investigation came after Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez earlier ordered the Ombudsman Visayas to expand the scope of its investigation to include other projects undertaken for the summit mainly by the DPWH, which received P1.5 billion for various summit beautification projects.

But it was likewise prompted by the claim of local businessman Crisologo Saavedra, the whistleblower in the P365-million lamppost scam, that the surveillance cameras were overpriced, too.

Saavedra was, however, a losing bidder in the surveillance camera project.

His firm, Pelican/Cebesos Development Corp., lost to Manila-based Triton Communications, but he kept saying his bid was lower. He was accused of failing to deliver the cameras after winning the bid.

Investigators from the Presidential Anti Graft Commission (PAGC) were told by Philippine National Police officials in Cebu that the PNP officials have not yet signed the papers signifying that they were accepting the Triton cameras because those that have been delivered did not match specifications.

Some of the surveillance cameras, it was learned, were not functioning and some units were transferred to traffic intersections because another piece of equipment that should be used together with the cameras, pieces of radio communications equipment, have not arrived.

But while some of the cameras did not function during the Asean summit, the Department of Budget and Management had already released P61 million to their supplier, Triton.

Santiago said another P21 million was to be released as a second payment to the firm.

Santiago said officials of the DPWH ignored several calls from Ombudsman investigators inquiring into the status of the P21 million balance payment.

"It seems they're (DPWH officials) eluding us," said Santiago.

She said she would ask Ombudsman Gutierrez to issue another order stopping the release of the P21 million.

"We called up DBM but as of this time, there is no fund yet for the release of the P21 million. Precisely, we want to know from DPWH if they will be the one to release the fund but they were not cooperating. In view of this, we would be constrained to ask for the (cease and desist) order. It is safer that way than not knowing that 21 million would be released anytime," Santiago said.

An official of DPWH Central Visayas, who refused to be named, confirmed that the agency already paid 80 percent of the P90 million surveillance cameras.

The official said the agency would pay the remaining 20 percent after the final inspection and formal turnover of the surveillance cameras to the police regional office.

Chief Supt. Sylverio Alarcio, head of the police regional office, said a team from the PNP, DPWH and Commission on Audit would conduct a final inspection before the PNP formally accepts the project. *With reports from Suzzane Salva-Alueta, Cebu Daily News*

Solcom files rights abuse cases vs NPA

SAN PABLO, LAGUNA—MILITARY OFFICERS AND EIGHT civilians claiming to be relatives of victims of human rights abuses in Quezon and Laguna have filed 161 cases of "atrocities" against the communist New People's Army (NPA) at the Commission on Human Rights on Wednesday.

The cases included murder, liquidation, extortion and even NPA raids from 2000 to 2006.

Maj. Gen. Fernando Mesa, commanding general of the 2nd Infantry Division, said the complaints were proof that the military also valued human rights. "This kind of endorsement to the CHR is part of our advocacy work and responsibility to be the protector of the people," he said.

The filing of the cases was not just a reaction to international investigations of extrajudicial killings blamed on the Philippine military, said Col. Jorge Segovia, commanding chief of the 202nd Infantry Brigade. He said the people should see that the NPA rebels were No. 1 in committing human rights violations.

The officers challenged the militant human rights group Karapatan to also look into cases committed by the rebels.

Niña Catherine Calleja, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Pampanga bishop speaks: Reject jueteng, graft bets

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

DING DA RING
PAKAKALULU
ATAD TAMU
CAPITO

FR. EDDIE Panlilio with his supporters during his filing of candidacy for governor.
TONETTE OREJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

CITY OF SAN FERnando—In what is seen as his most explicit indictment of jueteng and corruption in the quarry industry, Pampanga Archbishop Paciano Aniceto on Friday called on the province's more than a million voters to reject candidates involved in those irregularities.

"As leaders of the Church, we challenge all candidates running for any government position in Pampanga to categorically and truthfully declare in public they have not been—and will never be—involved in jueteng and forms of illegal gambling, indiscriminate and corrupt quarrying, vote-buying, any form of cheating in the elections, exorbitant campaigning, violence and extrajudicial killings, illegal drug business," Aniceto said in the three-page pastoral statement.

The statement will be read in Masses in the province's 90 parishes starting today (March 31).

Issued on the first day of the 45-day campaign period for local candidates, the statement expressed what so far was Aniceto's most unequivocal position on issues in the May 14 elections.

"As far as I know, this is the first time in the diocese that this kind of statement has been made," said Bishop Roberto Mallari in a phone interview.

In the last 15 years, Aniceto, 72, had consistently spoken out against jueteng and missing quarry taxes, but this was the first time his reflections tackled how these issues are now influencing Pampanga elections.

"This statement is in response to your clamor for us to speak up ...," Aniceto said.

"In the light of current developments in Philippine politics, it is for very obvious reasons that the nation's attention is focused on Pampanga because of well-based claims that now, more than ever, money is again becoming the very bone of contention over Kapampangan politics," he said.

"We speak of money, either from jueteng or from questionable quarrying activities," he said.

"The shady patrons who are engaged in illegal and immoral businesses and who have all the money to spend on elections are bound to take control over politics and governance if we do not do anything ..."

The statement did not name Board Member Lilia Pineda, whose husband Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, is a suspected jueteng lord, and Gov. Mark Lapid—two gubernatorial candidates linked to illegal gambling and quarrying.

Mallari said Aniceto's rejection of candidates involved in jueteng and illegal quarrying should not be taken as an endorsement of a Catholic priest running for governor in the province.

"We thought of [the statement] before Fr. Ed decided to run for governor," Mallari said, referring to Fr. Eddie Panlilio.

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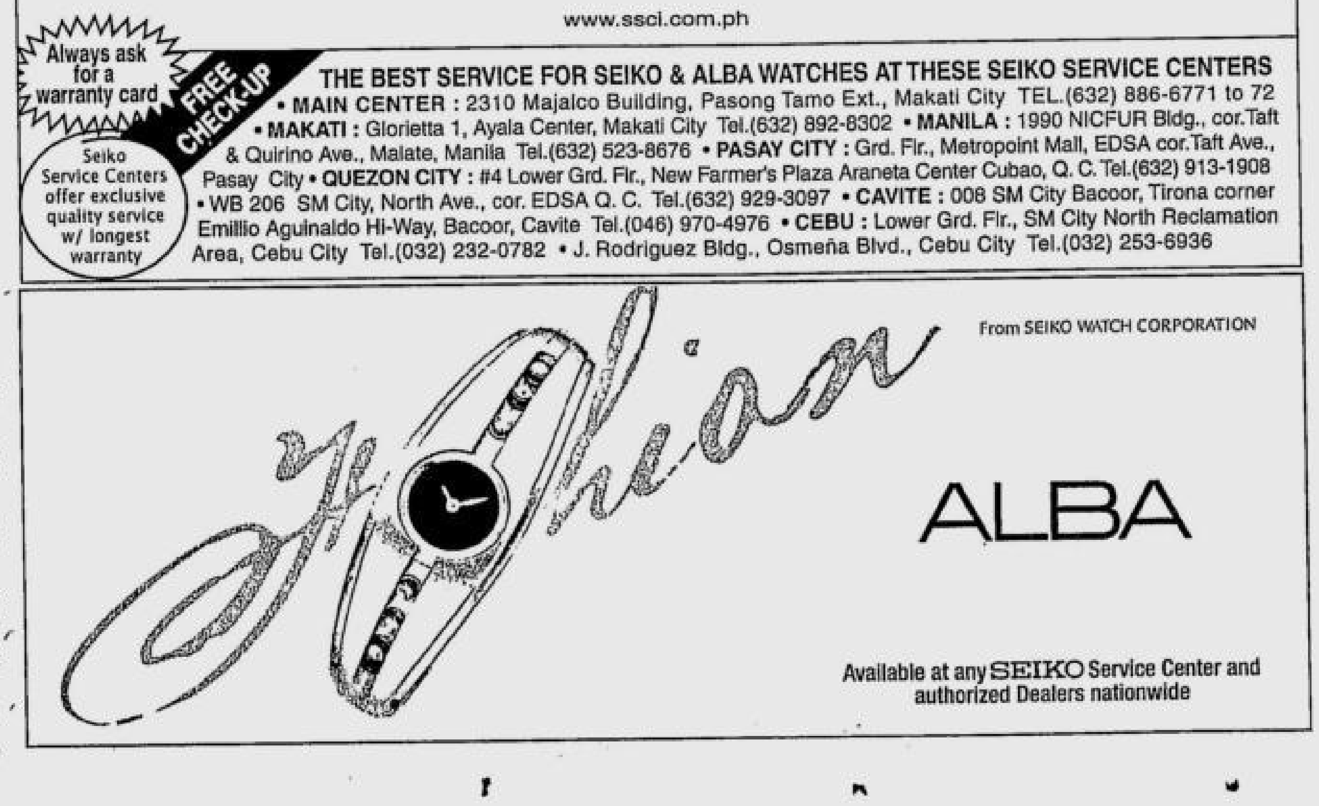
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Women's homes windows to the past

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
Iloilo City

BY VISITING THEIR HOMES and the places they had frequented, women's groups are hoping to retrieve stories of women who had been rendered near invisible on the pages of Iloilo's history.

They have found, among other items, upraised ladles, sturdy hand looms, books and blessed icons, made smooth by many times of handling.

Some houses owned by privileged women still stand in grandeur, but the places where poor women had worked and lived were obliterated by war, progress and daily misfortunes.

"By visiting the houses of women, we get to know them and their achievements we never knew before," said Rosario Asong, a professor at the University of the Philippines in the Visayas, who joined the heritage tour on March 27, as part of the celebration of Women's Month in March.

The first stop was Sinamay House in Villa Arevalo, home to four generations of a family that weave textiles like the "*patadyong*" and the "*hablon*." The family industry was started by Gabriela Abaha in the 1800s. She passed it on to her daughter Maria Chavez, and granddaughter Rosario Gison.

Today, Sinamay House is managed by Gison's daughter, Cecilia Villanueva. It is a reminder of Iloilo's economic rise. In the late 1800s, Iloilo had a flourishing textile industry driven by countless hand looms that had kept women busy in their homes. However, the entry of cheap cotton cloth from Manchester, England—with sugar from Iloilo and Negros as the return cargo—had killed the weaving industry.

Sinamay House and women weavers associations in the southern Iloilo towns of Miagao, Igbaras and San Joaquin have been trying to revive the industry.

1900 feminist

Villa Arevalo is also the home of Sofia Reyes de Veyra, one of the leaders of the Asociacion Feminista Ilongga (Association of Ilongga Feminists) organized in 1906.

The group was the first to campaign for women's suffrage, which was granted only in 1937 or after 30 years.

De Veyra's monument, which is among the few women's markers in Iloilo, stands at the heart of Villa Arevalo's plaza.

The adjoining Molo District was once famous for its exclusive school for girls founded in 1875 by one of the pioneer educators in Western Visayas, Jovita Avanceña, popularly known as Maestra Vita. The school produced two suffragists—De Veyra and Pura Villanueva Kalaw.

A must-stop in Molo is the "*pasalubong*" center, Panaderia de Molo, built in 1899 by the Jason spinsters, namely Marciana, Soledad and Natividad. The bakery offers a variety of biscuits baked by wood-fired ovens. When the sisters died, their niece, Luisa Jason Sanson, inherited the business that she later passed on to her children and grandchildren.

STATUES of women at the house of Magdalena Jalandoni. DIOSA LABISTE

During the heritage tour, Sanson's granddaughter, Gina Gaona, was supervising women who were icing, baking and mixing ingredients for *biscocho*, *hojaldres*, *bañadas* and *galletas* from recipes more than a hundred years old.

Not far from the bakery is the Gothic-Renaissance Molo Church, also known as "All-Women Church" for its 16 life-sized statues of women saints arranged on interfacing columns.

The house of Rosendo Mejica, founder of the Makinaugalingon newspaper, is in Baluarte, Molo. The place is where the first public elementary school was also established.

The newspaper, published in 1946, is the first vernacular daily in Western Visayas. After Mejica's death, the management of the publishing business went to his daughter, Eulogia Mejica, who was also remembered for organizing, with her sister Ramona, a rondalla named Kabugwason (Morning Star).

The house, now a museum, contains published works, antique furniture and family memorabilia.

In the heart of the city, standing on Rizal and Ibarra Streets, is the monument of Maria Clara, a character in national hero Jose Rizal's novel, Noli Me Tangere.

Fort San Pedro, overlooking the island-province of Guimaras, once protected Iloilo City from Moro, Dutch and British attacks. In the 18th- and 19th-century textile boom, groups of women weavers used to work inside the fort. It was destroyed by heavy bombardment from American forces in 1945.

The tour also passed by the old houses of rich families on E. Lopez Street in Jaro District. Among them are the Nelly Garden and the Montinola Antillan House. Nearby is Colegio de San Jose, said to be the oldest existing school for girls in Iloilo but is now coeducational.

The house of Magdalena Jalandoni (1891-1978) on Comision Civil Street is now a museum. In 1969, Jalandoni was given the First Republic Cultural Heritage Award for Literature by the government in recognition of her lifetime work. She had written 66 volumes of work, composed of 24 novels, epics, dramas, translations, meditations, short stories, lyric poems, an autobiography and a bibliography.

She had continued writing until she could write no more. She never married.

Jalandoni's house is unlike other houses-turned-museum because of its collection. Instead of fine china and other symbols of opulence, books, dioramas on history and local culture, paintings, statues, awards and other mementos of a writing life were on display.

A short walk is the Jaro Cathedral where the statue of Our Lady of Candles is displayed. Said to be miraculous, the icon draws many devotees, especially on Feb. 2, its feast day.

Florenda Española, the coordinator of Ugsad, the regional gender resource center which organized the tour joined by about 50 women, said the visits to women homes and monuments have yielded rich historical data that the group would include in its research on the history of women in Western Visayas.

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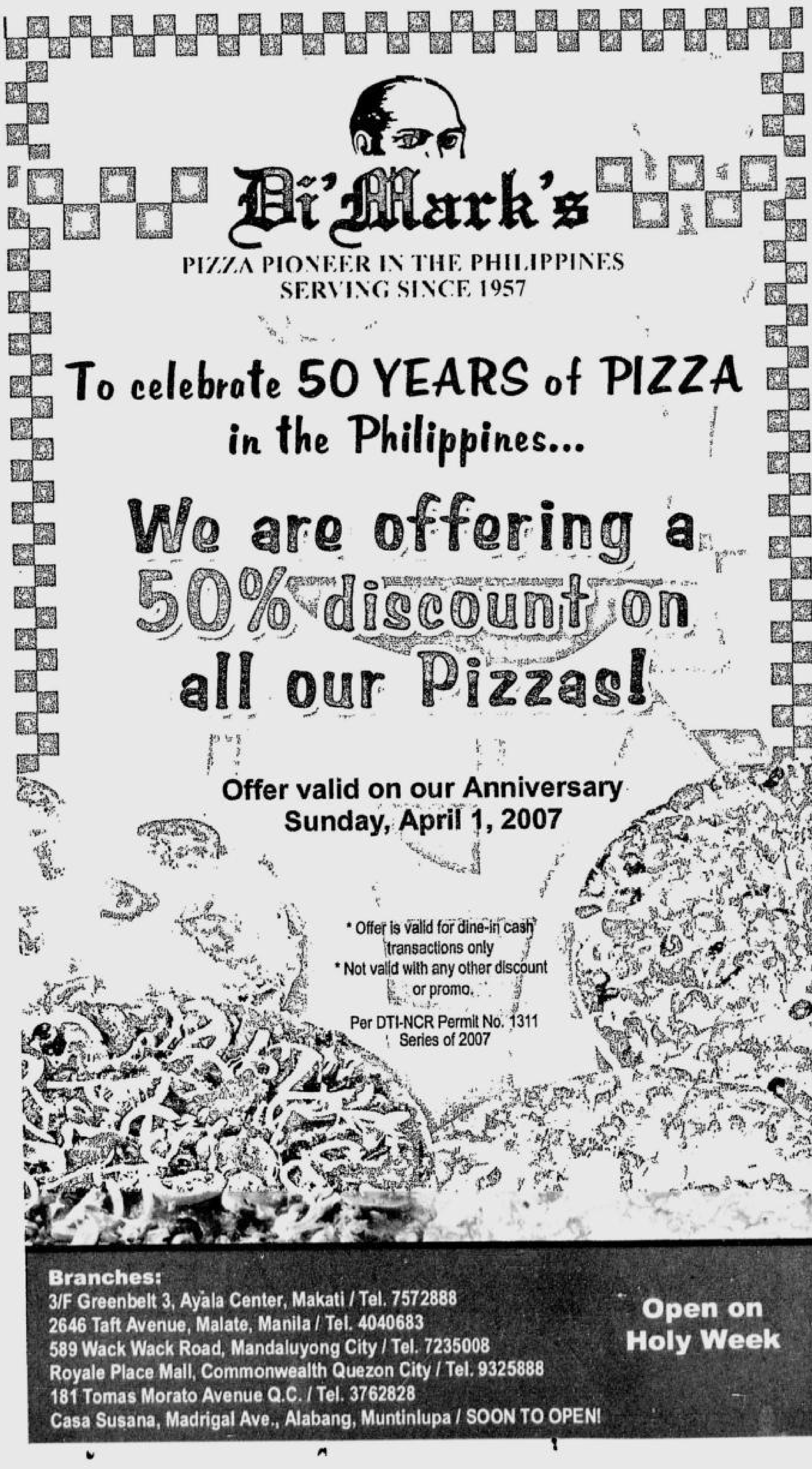

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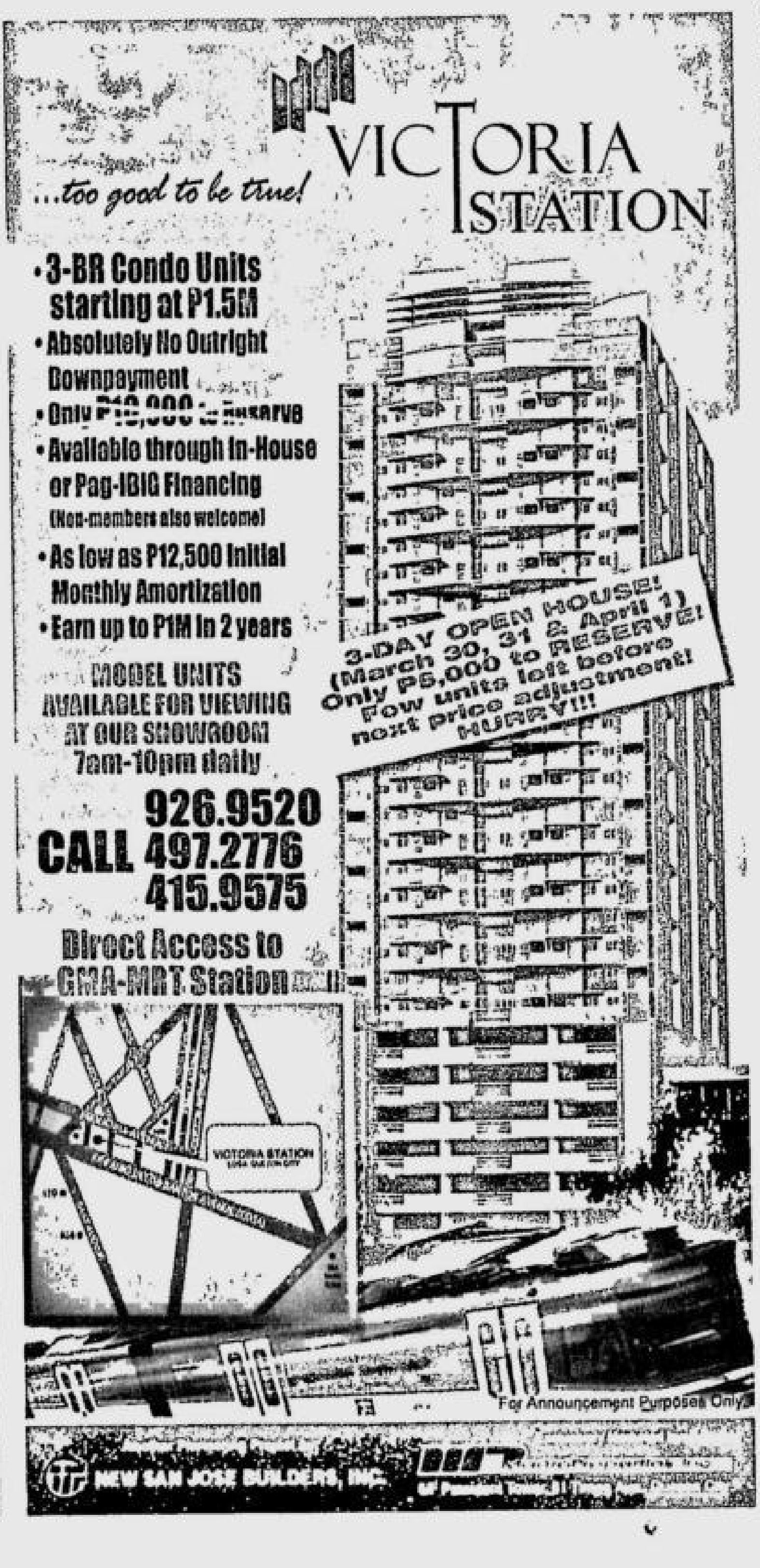

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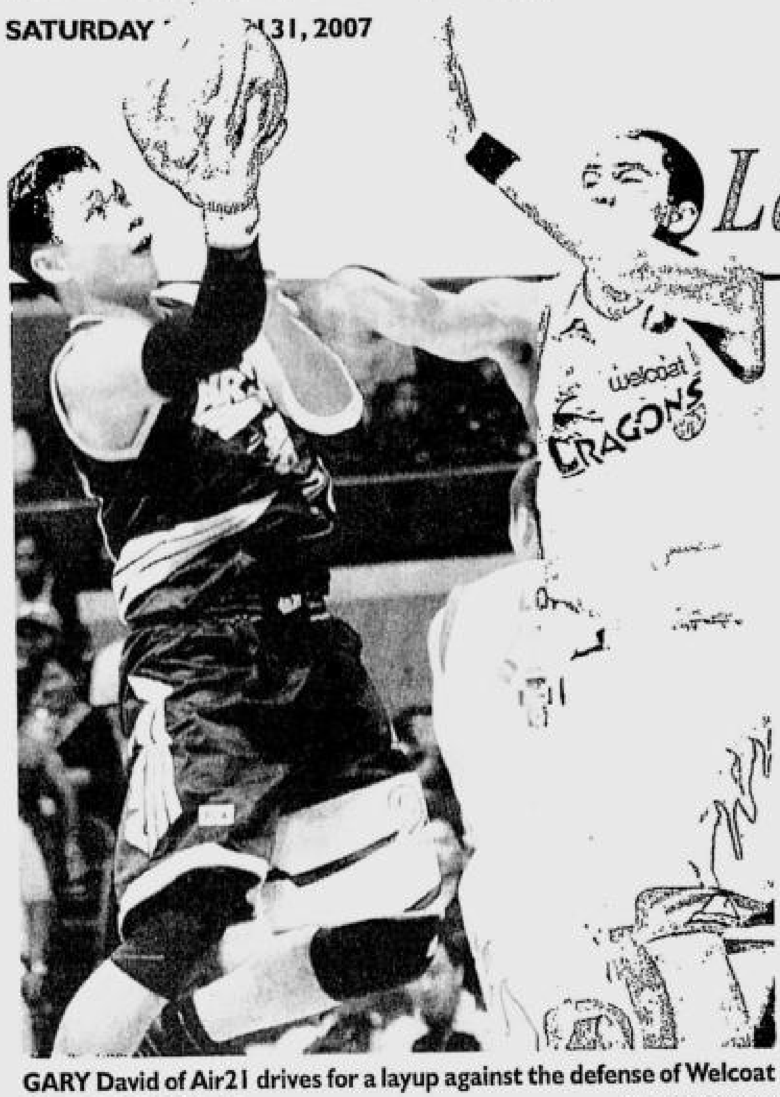


GARY David of Air21 drives for a layup against the defense of Welcoat big man Jay-R Reyes.
AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Welcoat trips Air21; TNT stops Barangay Ginebra

GAME TODAY (*Subic Gym, Olongapo*)
7 p.m.—Alaska vs Purefoods

By Musong R. Castillo

AIR21 HAS ANOTHER STREAK GOING, BUT of the losing kind this time.

A Welcoat side that took the floor to regain lost pride dealt the Express a second straight defeat and snapped a slide of its own after Charles Clark hit 40 points in a 103-99 overtime victory last night in the PBA Fiesta Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Jay-R Reyes led three other locals with twin digits after shooting 19, grabbing 13 rebounds and posting five blocks as the newcomer Dragons, after being blown off the court by their last two foes, rebounded to improve to 2-4.

"I'm very happy, because we were able to bounce back after embarrassing losses to Alaska and Talk 'N Text," said coach Leo Austria.

JJ Sullinger scattered 31 points and Mark Cardona added 28 as Talk 'N Text ended Barangay Ginebra's winning run at four with a 99-92 victory in the second game. The Phone Pals improved to 3-3, while the Gin Kings, who played without Rudy Hatfield, dropped to 5-2.

Meanwhile, the Express missed enforcer Homer Se, who was suspended a game and fined P50,000 by the Commissioner's Office for physically coming into contact with referee Throngy Aldaba during that loss to the Barako.

The scores:
First Game

WELCOAT 103—Clark 40, Reyes 19, Lopez 19, Wainwright 10, Compton 8, Gelig 5, Ibanez 2, Baguion 0, Cabatu 0, Lao 0, Felhl 0.

AIR21 99—David 27, Daniels 20, Santos 17, Canaleta 10, Dimaunahan 7, Arboleda 7, Telan 5, Andaya 4, torion 2.

Quarters: 19-all, 34-45, 60-57, 93-all, 103-99

Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 99—Sullinger 31, Cardona 28, Billones 14, Carey 8, Allado 8, Washington 5, Fran 3, Belano 2, Pablo 0, De Ocampo 0.

BARANGAY GINEBRA 92—Nealy 34, Macapagal 12, Menk 10, Chia 8, Tubid 8, Salvacion 6, Mamaril 5, Seigle 4, Echavez 3, Santos 2, Holper 0.

Quarters: 21-23, 43-54, 69-65, 99-92

Manalo vs Corteza in nat'l pool finals

MANALO: Balls favored me.

MARLON MANALO AND LEE Vann Corteza took different routes toward the finals of the 2nd BSCP National Pool Championships at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium last night.

The 30-year-old Manalo overpowered Japan-based Antonio Lining, 11-5, to grab the first finals seat while Corteza followed suit with an 11-10 squeaker over Dennis Orcollo.

Manalo enjoyed a 5-1 lead in the race-to-11, alternate-break format, but Lining managed to close in at 6-4 after winning the 10th frame in one of the TV table matches.

But the more determined Manalo took the next four racks to reach the hill.

"Nickoy [Lining] had a lot of misses and the ball seemed to favor me," Manalo said in Filipino. The snooker specialist earlier ousted defending champion Alex "The Lion" Pagulayan to reach the semifinal round.

Manalo, fresh from a brief Euro Tour this year, cornering a pair of third-place finishes in the Switzerland and Czech Republic, actually bounced back from the loser's bracket to grab a seat in the finals of the event that offers P500,000 to the champion.

It was a see-saw battle between Corteza and Orcollo, with Corteza taking a 9-7 lead. Orcollo, however, took the next three racks to move ahead, 10-9, before Corteza equalized anew.

Orcollo broke but failed to clean up and allowed Corteza to escape with the victory.

Billiards and Snooker Congress of the Philippines (BSCP) president Ernesto Fajardo said aside from the top purse, the winner could get an automatic berth in the 2007 Guinness Asian 9-ball tour which kicks off on April 20 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

"This national championship is one of the most important events of the BSCP," said Fajardo. Already, the national pool championship is being used as a criteria for the selection of the pool squad that will be sent to the Thailand Southeast Asian Games this December.

BSCP chair and the organizing Raya Sports president Yen Makabenta also earlier said that the top six finishers of this San Miguel Beer-backed event—Manalo, Corteza, Orcollo, Pagulayan, Lining and Gallego—are assured of tickets to the November World Pool Championship here in Manila.

In the distaff side, Mary Ann Basas pounced on an uncharacteristic scratch off the break by top seed Rubilen Amit to seal a 7-4 upset and book a slot in the women's finals.

Amit was on the table breaking for the lead with the score pegged at 4-all but scratched there, allowing Basas to take over and cleanup the ninth frame.

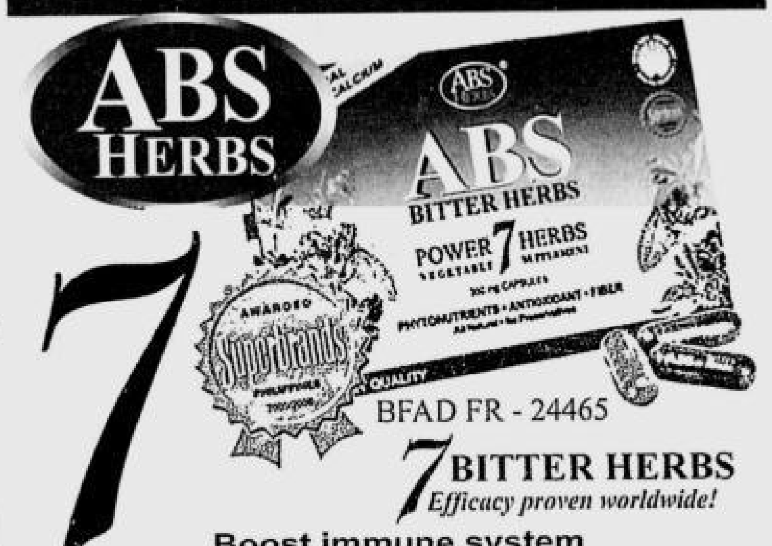
That was all the break Basas needed to wrap up the next three matches and seal a duel against either Iris Rañola or Jingle David for the title.

Actually Amit had an impressive start by taking the first three racks but missed the No. 8 ball in the fourth rack to allow Basas back into the game.

"That fourth rack was also crucial because I could have made it 4-0," Amit said in Filipino.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

DIABETES?



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AFP drowns out protest ...

From page A1

out protests.

Some 100 members of the human rights group Karapatan experienced this first hand yesterday when their protest rally at the camp's gate 1 was drowned out by upbeat songs like Los Lobos' version of "La Bamba," and Rick Astley's "Never Gonna Give You Up."

Camp officials said this new tack was meant to "calm down" ralliers who tend to lose their cool.

But instead of calming down, the protestors got upset, saying that the military simply wanted to shut them up.

5th time

"This is the fifth time they've done this to us," said Doris Cuario, secretary general of Karapatan-Southern Tagalog, describing yesterday's rally in Filipino.

Cuario said the first time the military played loud music was on Feb. 13 when their group staged a rally to coincide with the visit of United Nations Special Rapporteur Philip Alston to the camp.

Alston went to Camp Aguinaldo to meet with defense and military officials in connection with the investigation he was conducting on the spate of political killings in the country which militant groups said were the handiwork of the military.

Alston has since come out with a report that the government and the military had not done much in addressing the problem.

Yesterday, Cuario said their group was only able to air its grievances without interruption for about 15 minutes.

The military authorities brought out their sound system and played loud music drowning out the protests.

"Why do they have to be so rude?" said Karapatan head Marie Hilao-Enriquez. "We hope they would allow the ralliers to speak... They rendered them inutile in their protest action."

Enriquez said they came all the way from the Southern Tagalog region, where many activists had been killed.

They were at the camp yesterday to protest the extrajudicial killings and the so-called urban militarization. They also wanted to remind the military that it had no role to play in the coming elections.

Cuario said they also found metal spikes near the tires of two jeepneys they brought to the protest rally.

Universal language

Deputy camp commander Col. Flaviano Valdehueza Jr., said playing loud music during rallies at the camp's gate was the brainchild of Camp commander Brig. Gen. Alfredo Cayton.

The intention, Valdehueza said, was to calm things down. During rallies, protestors tend to get angry and say nasty things.

"We play music because universally, everybody likes to listen to music, even if they can't carry a tune," he said.

And so far, "playing music has been effective. The ralliers calm down and end their program early," he added.

Losing sense of humor

Valdehueza also denied that the military had planted metal spikes near the jeepneys belonging to the ralliers.

"As far as I'm concerned giving such orders is not part of the countermeasures," he said.

So will the military play loud music every time protestors mount rallies at the camp's gates?

Valdehueza said this would probably continue "until we come up with another idea."

Besides, he added: "*Ang pikon, talo* (Lose your sense of humor and you lose)."

And while the sentiments of ralliers were drowned out by "La Bamba" yesterday, they still had the last word: Before leaving, protestors spray painted this message on a patch of road in front of the camp's gate: "*Militar sa kanayunan at kalunsuran, paalisin* (Military in rural and urban areas, get out)."

Workers to enjoy 5-day respite

From page A1

Bataan Day (April 9, Monday), a special non-working day to "give our people full and uninterrupted opportunity to ponder on the significance of the Holy Week."

Workers will enjoy another three-day weekend in June—from the 9th to the 11th. The proclamation declared June 11 (Monday) a non-working holiday, and Independence Day, June 12 (Tuesday), a working day.

This year, there will be three four-day weekends: from Nov. 1 to 4, from Dec. 22 to 25 and from Dec. 29 to Jan. 1, 2008. Dec. 29 and 30 fall on a weekend, while Dec. 31 is a special holiday as it is the last day of the year.

In 2001, the President approved two four-day weekends to allow Filipinos to enjoy the Christmas holidays. She said the break would also boost local tourism.

The original plan was to have an 11-day holiday, but it was discarded after some sectors warned against the disruption of business. *Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

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Why Enroll at Silliman University Medical School?
BY: JONATHAN C. AMANTE. MD. FPCP. FPSN

Silliman University Medical School (SUMS) is distinct from other medical schools for several reasons. Its vision is to become the leading institution in the region in providing quality medical education geared towards producing competent physicians guided by Christian principles in the delivery of excellent health care. The curriculum has been appraised by CHED as innovative and modern because it combines the best features of Traditional and Problem Based Learning teaching methods. The ultimate objective is to produce graduates who can become a HEALER* (**H**ealth Care Provider, **E**ducator, **A**dvocate, **L**eader, **E**xecutive and **R**esearcher).

Presently, there are forty five (45) qualified and dedicated faculty members who are well respected in their academic and clinical practice. The concerns of students are accommodated within the faculty room where at the same time wireless internet access and other academic support services are available. The venue for the development of medical education is supported by the following:

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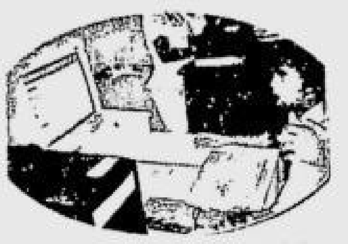
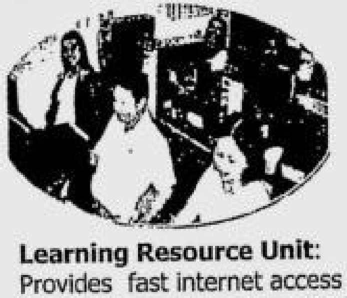
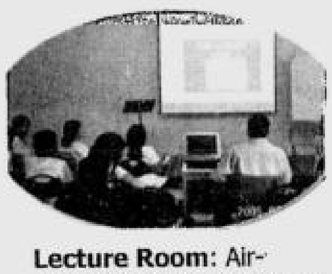
Basic Sciences Laboratory: Equipped with the Powerlab for basic sciences experiments plus the state-of-the-art Olympus binocular microscope projector with digital camera for telemedicine capability.





Learning Resource Unit: Provides fast internet access for updated review of medical literature. Contains educational CDs, print materials, and multifunctional printer and copier.



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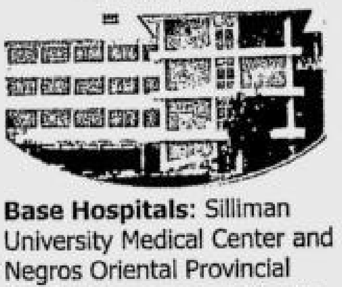

Base Hospitals: Silliman University Medical Center and Negros Oriental Provincial Hospital for service patients.

This unique and five-star medical education is further enhanced by the exposure of medical students to real university life experiences in this 106-year-old Silliman University campus. With the exception of the medical schools of state universities, the fees are approximately 25% lesser within the Visayas and up to 40% less compared to those in Metro Manila, since education is significantly subsidized by the university.

Furthermore, the school is situated in the "University Town" Dumaguete City, the City of Gentle People, which offers a student-friendly atmosphere and lower cost of living. All Bachelor of Science graduates/graduating students can apply. KINDLY SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH RELATIVES AND FRIENDS.

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'Tap water safe to drink'

Just as clean as bottled water, say experts

By Kristine L. Alave

SAVE YOURSELF THE EXPENSE. DRINK TAP water.

Water quality experts yesterday urged Metro Manila residents to use water from their faucets for drinking as it is as safe as commercial bottled water.

The Metro Manila Drinking Water Quality Monitoring Committee said their December 2006 and January-February 2007 data showed that, "in general, tap water is clean and safe."

Representatives of the Department of Health, Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), and water companies said the findings should "restore people's trust in the quality of tap water in Metro Manila and eventually lessen people's over-reliance on bottled water."

Eduardo Santos, chief of the MWSS-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO), said bottled water, which had become a "status symbol" for many Filipinos, was unnecessary as tap water was safe and potable. "We drink water from the faucet," he added.

Santos said tests made in the past 12 months showed that the metropolis' water was free of bacteria that caused water-borne diseases like cholera, typhoid, and dysentery.

He noted that there had been no water-borne disease outbreaks in Metro Manila since early 2005, when Pasay City registered cholera cases.

Santos also assured Metro Manila residents there was plenty of water this dry season.

He said reservoirs in Angat and Ipo Dams were well above critical levels. "We have an adequate supply," he said.

The water quality committee said water companies servicing the metropolis satisfac-

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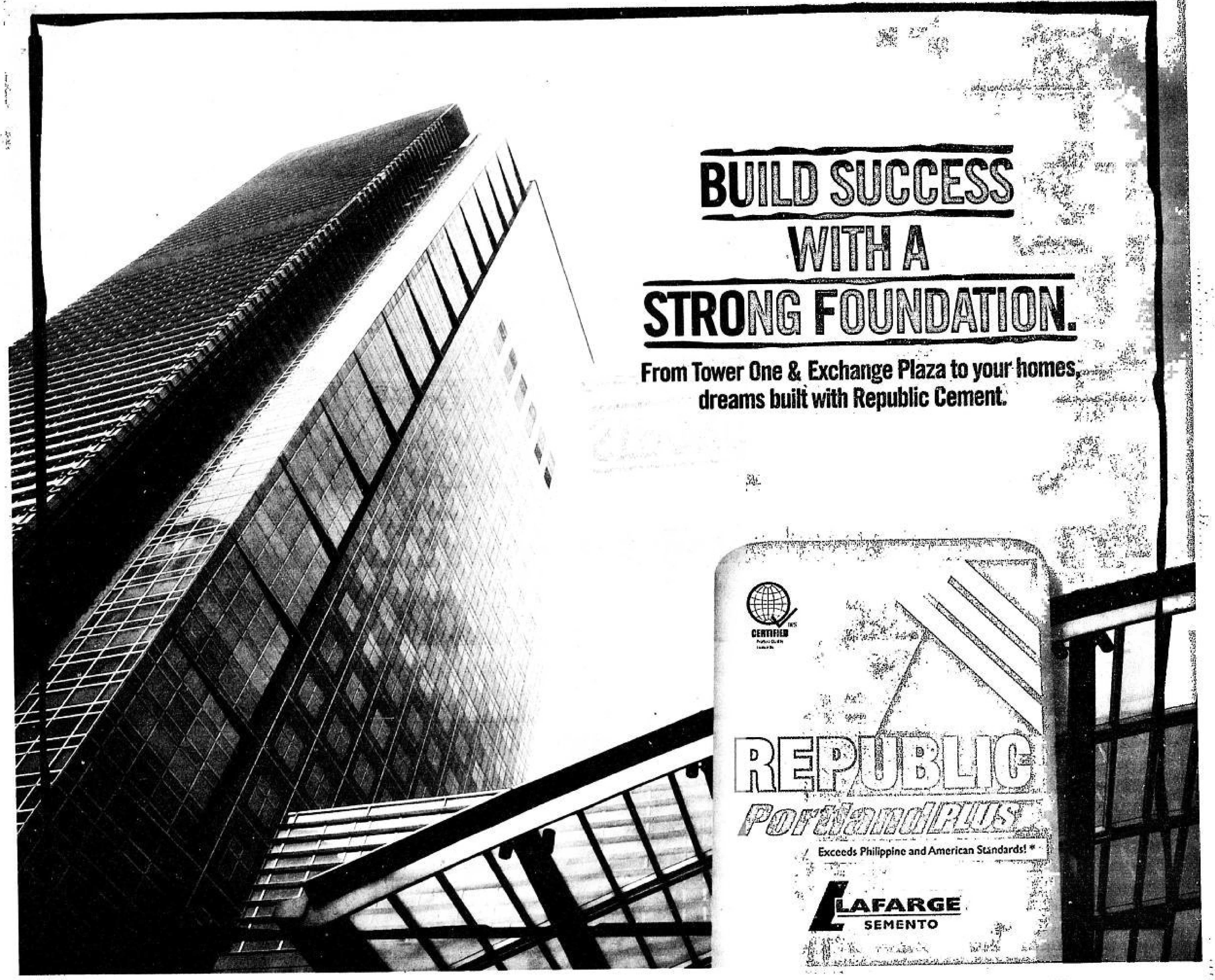

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Gov't agencies get ready for Holy Week traffic

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE MULTI-AGENCY "OPLAN KALAKbay" team will be assisting travelers from April 2 to 10.

Similar assistance programs have also been launched by the Tollways Management Corp. (TMC) for the North Expressway and the South Luzon Tollway Corp. (SLTC) for the South Luzon Expressway.

"Oplan Kalakbay" is being spearheaded by the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC).

Spokesperson Thompson Lantion told the INQUIRER that attached agencies of the DOTC would secure land, air and maritime transport.

The Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board and the Land Transportation Office are setting up help desks at bus terminals to assist commuters and traffic officers.

The help desks' work will be coordinated with the Metro Manila Development Authority, Philippine National Police, local government units, and other government agencies.

For air travelers, the Air Transportation Office and the Manila International Airport Authority will put up assistance centers at domestic and international airports.

The Philippine Ports Authority, Maritime Industry Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard will help secure and manage ports nationwide.

Lantion said there would be ambulances and first-aid teams in every assistance center.

Both TMC and SLTC will have their first-aid teams, too, along with highway patrols and tollway help desks in both expressways.

TMC rescheduled vacations of patrol members until after the Holy Week so it would have a full force during Lent, vice president for traffic operations Nicolas Manalo said.

Manalo asked motorists to help ensure they had a safe and comfortable trip. "Some motorists have not really been planning their trips," he said.

The SLTC said it activated motorists' assistance centers for commuters and motorists going to Batangas during high-traffic periods like long holidays. The main center is located where the roads to Calamba, Laguna and Batangas converge.

Among the tips for travelers:

- Plan your route and cargo or luggage ahead of time.
- Check your B.L.O.W.B.A.G. (brake, light, oil, water, battery, air or tire pressure, gas).
- Bring a good spare tire, jack and cross wrench.
- Secure your cargo, especially those placed on the roof of your car.
- Do not overload your vehicle.
- Secure your passengers. Even those in the back should wear seatbelts. Avoid reckless driving.

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Easy for Puno to blame cops

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

IT WAS EASY FOR INTERIOR SECRETARY Ronnie Puno to say there were lapses in procedure in the police handling of the hostage situation at the Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila, last Wednesday because he wasn't there.

I was there, and I saw that the police did the best they could under the circumstances.

In chess, the *mirons* (kibitzers) know the right moves for the chessmen better than the players because they are not under pressure.

The same is true in real-life situations. People who watch from the sidelines blame those involved in conflicts for their "wrong moves." But let these same people get into the act themselves and they wouldn't know what to do.

If Puno honestly placed himself in the shoes of the policemen under the heat of the sun and being pressured by the public, he would realize that handling a crisis situation does not follow hard and fast rules.

Each crisis is different from another. Different crises call for different solutions.

* * *

Some quarters criticize administration candidate Luis "Chavit" Singson for allegedly cashing in on the incident for his senatorial campaign.

The Ilocos Sur governor's reply to his critics: "*Inggit lang sila* (They're just envious)." He couldn't have been more blunt and to the point.

What would Singson's critics have him do after the hostage-taker, Armando "Jun" Ducat asked for him—make himself unavailable and possibly endanger the lives of the 26 children and four teachers?

It's not Singson's fault if he gets a very high rating in the next survey because of what he did.

* * *

Isabelo Braza, president of Fabmik Construction and Equipment Co. Inc., which was one of those involved in the reported overpricing of lampposts in Cebu, wrote me a long letter to explain his side on the much-publicized controversy.

In the spirit of objectivity and fair play, here's what Braza said:

"The project costs were fair and reasonable for the street lamps and decorative lamps installed in Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu cities during the Asean Summit in January.

"The designs were custom-made, per specifications of the local government units, as a showcase for visiting Asean dignitaries.

"The project was on a rush and urgent basis where excessive manpower was required. More equipment had to be utilized particularly because the limestone soil in Cebu needed special drilling."

Comparing the systems he installed with what other contractors were offering is like comparing mangoes to camote, Braza said. The cost of one is not comparable to the other, he added.

Issue on BJMP head still up in air with new TRO

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE LEADERSHIP BATTLE AT THE BUREAU of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) has become more muddled than ever with the recent issuance of a temporary restraining order (TRO) by the Court of Appeals.

The TRO, which was issued on March 28 and ruled in favor of petitioner Chief Supt. Armando Llamasares, enjoined respondents Chief Supt. Clarito Jover and Quezon City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge Jose Paneda from "enforcing and implementing the assailed issuances" and from continuing with the court proceedings.

The issuances, according to Llamasares' counsel Arnulfo Pelagio, referred to Paneda's March 7 decision ordering Jover and Llamasares to cease and desist from occupying the position of the BJMP chief, and the judge's March 17 order denying Llamasares' motion for consideration regarding the proper venue of the proceedings.

Matter of venue

"We do not wish to venture into the merits of the case because the issue here is the venue, which should be in Malolos, Bulacan where General Llamasares lives," Pelagio said in a press briefing at the Sulo Hotel yesterday.

Pelagio said that with the TRO, it should be clear that Llamasares, who was appointed by no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo, should assume his rightful position as BJMP director.

However, Jover's lawyer, Danny Villanueva, stressed that the petition for quo warranto they filed before Paneda's court was a question on the validity of Llamasares' appointment.

"If they think Llamasares is qualified, why are they avoiding the merits of the case and instead concentrating on the venue?" Villanueva said in an interview with the INQUIRER.

Credentials

In a writ of preliminary injunction he issued last March 27, Paneda ordered Llamasares to refrain from performing his duties as director of the BJMP, a month after Jover questioned his credentials before the court.

Paneda stated in his order that until respondent Llamasares "is able to establish that he meets the minimum qualifications for the disputed position, his appointment thereto and discharge of the functions of the office could not be given the imprimatur (or approval) of this Court."

The order came after Jover, the bureau's officer in charge before Llamasares' appointment last Feb. 21, applied for the issuance of a temporary restraining order in the petition for quo warranto and injunction against Llamasares.

Jover claimed that Llamasares did not possess the 3rd level eligibility (Career Service Eligibility (CSEE)/Career Executive Service or CES) required for the position. The judge, likewise, said Llamasares failed to dispute before the Court that Jover was the officer in charge of the BJMP before his appointment.

Tap water . . .

From page A19

torily met the bacteriological level set by the Philippine National Standards for Drinking Water (PNSDW).

The PNSDW requires that coliform, a type of bacteria found in water, must not be detectable in any 100 milligram sample.

If samples from large quantities are examined, it must not be present in 95 percent of samples taken.

Data from the committee said all the required 734 samples from the East Zone, which is serviced by the Ayala-owned Manila Water Company Inc., complied with the standard as all were found potable.

The East Zone is composed of parts of Manila, Makati, and Quezon Cities; Mandaluyong City, Pasig City, San Juan, Marikina City, Pateros, and Taguig City.

In the West Zone, which is supplied by the Lopez-owned Maynilad Water Services Inc., it was found that of the total 688 samples, about three were found to be not potable, representing a compliance rate of 99.56 percent.

The West Zone consists of parts of Manila, Makati and Quezon Cities; Caloocan City, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Parañaque, and Pasay cities.

Another random testing by the MWSS-RO showed bacteriological level compliance in December 2006 and January 2007 was at 100 percent. In February, it was 98.4 percent, well above the required 95 percent.

Officials said the problem regarding samples that did not pass bacteriological tests was solved by cleaning and changing service pipes.

METROBRIEFS

Berroyo kin shot dead

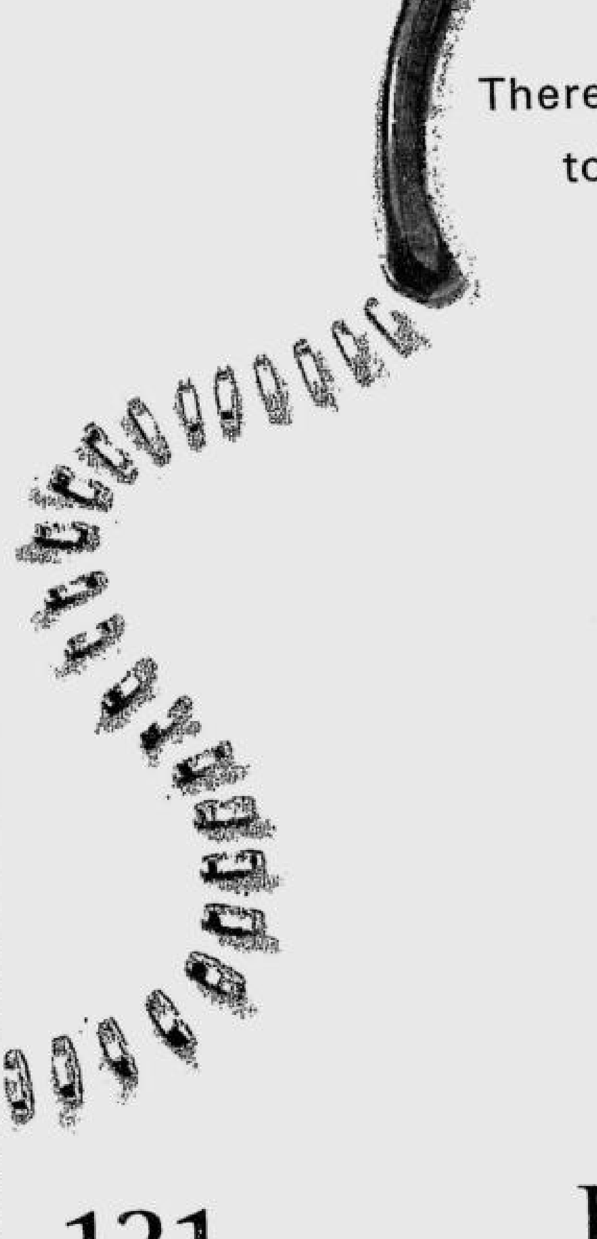
A 38-YEAR-OLD man, reportedly a nephew of Land Transportation Office chief Reynaldo Berroya, was killed by still unidentified suspects in Manila before dawn yesterday. Alexander Berroya, of R. Fernandez corner Raxabago Streets, Tondo, died while undergoing treatment at the Jose Reyes Memorial Medical Center (JRMMC) for a lone gunshot wound in the head. Chief Insp. Alejandro Yanquiling, head of the Manila Police District Homicide Division, said they were still hunting down the suspects, allegedly members of a street gang in Manila. The incident happened around 4 a.m. at the corner of Tayuman and Jose Abad Santos Street in Sta. Cruz. The victim, who allegedly came from a drinking spree, was on his way home when he met the suspects. Quoting witnesses, police said one of the suspects drew a gun and shot the victim without provocation. After the shooting, the suspects walked away casually as if nothing happened, one witness told police.

Tina G. Santos

Bridge open for Lenten break

LIGHT vehicles can still use the south-bound lane of the 73-year-old Tullahan Bridge in Valenzuela City, which is under repair, during the Holy Week. The earlier plan was to close the bridge yesterday. But project engineer Ed Santos told the INQUIRER they were delaying the closure because of the expected increase in the volume of vehicles next week. The bridge on the busy Mac Arthur Highway connects the cities of Caloocan and Malabon to Valenzuela City and towns in Bulacan. Total closure of the bridge will take place after the Lenten season, Santos said

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.



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WORLDBRIEFS

Hijacked plane lands at Khartoum airport

KHARTOUM, SUDAN—A plane hijacked while flying from Libya to Sudan has landed at Khartoum airport where authorities are negotiating with the hijacker, according to a Sudan Airways official at the airport. The official said the plane was taken over by a single hijacker, but he did not know the hijacker's nationality, motivations or what he was armed with. An editor at the official Sudan News Agency said the hijacker was Sudanese and the plane belonged to Sudan Airways. The editor spoke on condition of anonymity as he was not authorized to speak to the media. *AP*

Thai PM says elections set for December

BANGKOK—Thailand's Army-installed premier said Thursday elections to restore democracy will be held in December and rejected calls for emergency rule in Bangkok as he sought to cool soaring tensions. Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont said in brief remarks on national television that a referendum on a new constitution would be held by September, followed by parliamentary elections in December. The announcement came after Surayud met with the Council for National Security (CNS), as the ruling junta calls itself, amid calls from the top general for a state of emergency in Bangkok to crack down on swelling protests. *AFP*

Sudan agrees to UN force but US plans new sanctions

RIYADH/WASHINGTON—Sudan has agreed to allow UN troops to join an African Union force in its troubled Darfur region, Saudi Arabia said on Thursday, but the United States voiced doubts as it readied tough new sanctions. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir had long resisted the deployment of UN peacekeepers to the vast western province of Darfur, where Washington says a genocide has taken place through government support for nomadic militia groups. "Sudan has now agreed for the UN to provide logistical support to help African forces," Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal told a news conference at a summit of Arab nations. "This is a breakthrough that never happened before and we hope it leads immediately to a solution to the humanitarian tragedy in Darfur as soon as possible." *Reuters*

US caught off guard by Saudi king's attack on American presence in Iraq

WASHINGTON—US OFFICIALS said Thursday they were caught off guard by remarks of the Saudi king condemning the US intervention in Iraq as "an illegal foreign occupation" and were seeking clarification. But they sought to tamp down tensions over them.

"We were a little surprised to see those remarks," R. Nicholas Burns, the undersecretary of state for political affairs, told a Senate hearing, referring to the statement by King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia at the opening of an Arab League summit meeting in Riyadh on Wednesday. "We disagree with them."

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice scheduled a telephone call with Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, Adel al-Jubeir, who was traveling to Riyadh, an administration official said.

The official said the State Department had resisted going straight to Rice's counterpart, Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal, so as to try to lower the temperature of the rhetoric. He said Rice planned to question Jubeir about the Saudi monarch's remarks.

The Bush administration had been bending over backwards in recent weeks not to criticize Saudi Arabia, partly because it is hoping that Saudi leadership will help stem the rising influence of Iran.

And for the moment, Saudi and other Arab officials said the king's statements should be seen in that context, an effort to position himself to get the leverage he needs in the Arab world.

"He knew it would be a popular thing to say—the American occupation is one of the most unpopular facts on the Arab streets," said one Saudi official in Riyadh with close ties to the royal family. He allowed that "we don't want the Americans just to drop Iraq and leave; we would hold the Americans responsible for the damage if that happens."

But, he added that for the long term, if Saudi Arabia is going to lead the Arab world and serve as a counterbalance to Iran, the Saudi monarchy cannot be seen as supporting a foreign occupation in an Arab land.

"Everybody assumes that America is a big boy, and big boys have to put up with things," said Ziad Asali, president of the American Task Force on Palestine. He pointed to the closeness of the relationship between the Bush administration and the Saudi royal family.

The assumption, he said; is that the relationship can withstand a gentle whack or two. "But I think that assumption runs the risk of making things unpleasant," he said.

Analysts said Abdullah's harsh attack on the US military presence in Iraq could be a Saudi attempt to signal to Washington its anger over the situation in Iraq and build credibility among fellow Arabs.

The kingdom has taken an aggressive leadership role to quiet Mideast troubles, and wanted to show other Arabs it was willing to put their interests above its close ties to the United States.

The king made his remarks Wednesday at the opening session of the two-day Arab summit his country hosted in Riyadh. It was believed to be the first time the king publicly expressed that opinion.

"In beloved Iraq, blood is flowing between brothers, in the shadow of an illegitimate foreign occupation, and abhorrent sectarianism threatens a civil war," said Abdullah, whose country is a US ally that quietly aided the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq.

A Saudi official said the king was speaking as the president of the summit and his remarks reflected general frustration with the "patchwork" job the Americans were doing to end violence in Iraq.

The king also wanted to send a message that Iraq is an issue that Arabs cannot turn their back on, the official said.

NYT, AP

UK fails to gain strong UN support

UNITED NATIONS—A week after Iran captured 15 British naval personnel in the Gulf, the UN Security Council Thursday expressed "grave concern" at their detention but declined to back Britain with a call for their immediate release.

After more than four hours of haggling and strong Russian reservations, South African Ambassador Dumisani Kumalo, the current council chair, read a non-binding statement voicing "grave concern" and urging Tehran to allow "consular access" to the 15 British sailors and marines.

The council also backed UN chief Ban Ki-moon's call in talks with Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki in Saudi Arabia Thursday for "an early resolution of the problem, including the release" of the 15 detainees.

But the statement fell well short of what the British initially sought: censure of the Iranians for seizing the Britons, including a female sailor, last Friday in two boats during what London claims were anti-smuggling operations in Iraqi waters.

The initial British draft circulated Wednesday asked the council to "deplore the continuing detention by the Government of Iran of 15 UK naval personnel" and to back "calls for (their) immediate release." It noted that "the UK personnel were operating in Iraqi waters as part of the Multinational Force—Iraq under a mandate from the Security Council under Resolution 1723 (2006) and at the request of the government of Iraq." Several diplomats said Russia, backed by some other council members such as Indonesia, was keen to avoid giving the impression that the council was taking sides in what is seen as a bilateral dispute. *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

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Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
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MAHATMA GANDHI EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION, INC. (MAHATMA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL) 3270-A Armstrong Ave., Merville Access Rd., Pasay City	Dorothee Haar	French Teacher
PLAYMATES IMPORT CORPORATION 7232 Malugay St., Bel-Air, Makati City	Bok Hee Park	Vice President
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If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

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(PDI March 31, 2007)

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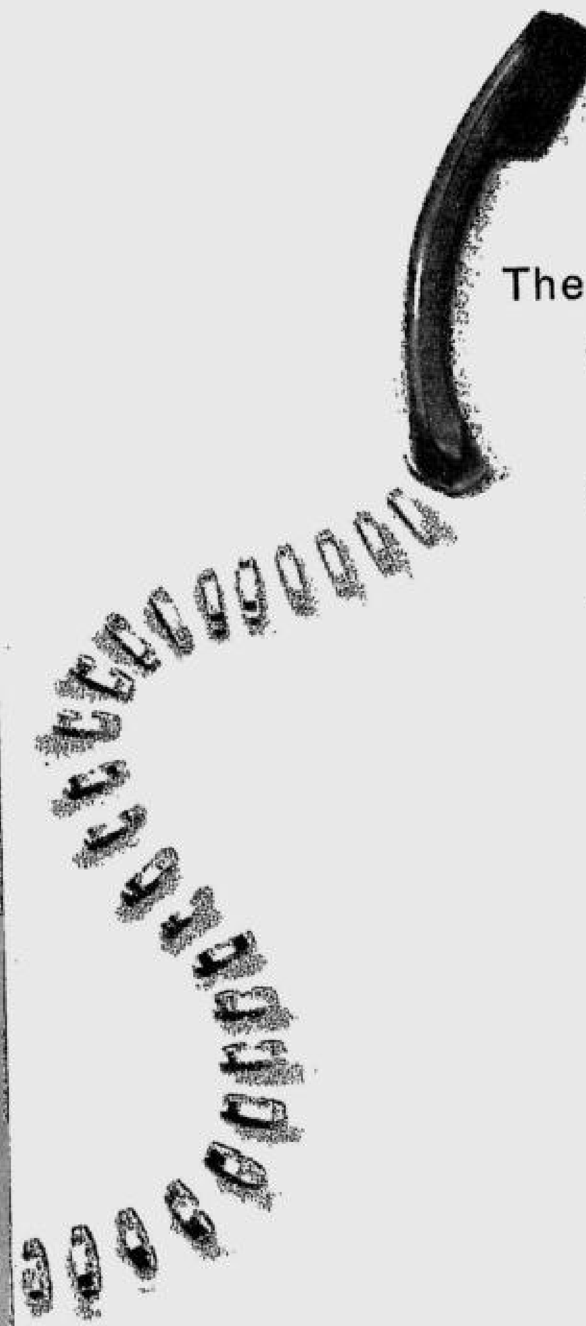

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Nearly 400 killed in Iraq bloodletting

BAGHDAD—NEARLY 400 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED OVER THE past three days in violence-wracked Iraq as insurgents and sectarian militias rip through a much-touted US security crackdown concentrated in Baghdad.

A series of coordinated bombings of Shiite marketplaces in and north of the capital flouted a latest plea from embattled Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki for a joint effort to curb the bloodshed threatening to tear his country apart.

"The country is facing many challenges which need a consolidated front in which all Iraqis must participate," Maliki said just hours before 125 people were killed in marketplace bombings in Baghdad and the Shiite town of Khalis.

Although US and Iraqi officials claim violence has fallen in Baghdad where nearly 80,000 troops are deployed to curb the bloodletting, two suicide bombers tore through a popular market on Thursday and killed 82 people.

Men, women and children were slaughtered as they shopped before the evening curfew and ahead of Friday, the Muslim day of rest.

The bombings in the Al-Shaab district, close to the Shiite bastion of Sadr City, bore the hallmark of al-Qaida linked Sunni extremists waging sectarian attacks on Shiites in a bid to keep alive the brutal communal warfare.

The attacks are seen as the latest challenge to the Mahdi Army militia made up of impoverished Shiite youths who have led the counter-attack on Sunnis but who have recently melted into rural villages to escape the Baghdad crackdown.

Hours before the Baghdad bombings, a string of vehicle bombs, roadside bombs and mortar attacks killed another 43 people and wounded dozens in Khalis.

The restive town lies in Diyala province, which has become the most dangerous stretch of country outside the capital. Four coordinated car bombings and mortar attacks there struck a market, courthouse and a new army base.

As in Baghdad, the explosions unleashed mayhem, killing young and old indiscriminately as they shopped in a favorite tactic of Sunni extremists bent on inflicting maximum civilian casualties.

But as brutal bomb attacks rattled security forces in and around Baghdad, a combined bout of insurgent and sectarian warfare in a northern town—once hailed as a symbol of a stable Iraq by US President George W. Bush—left authorities scrambling for measures to control a fresh outbreak of violence.

On Tuesday, a suicide bomber blew up a truck loaded with flour amid a crowd of Iraqis waiting for food supplies after a week of shortages in a Shiite area of Tal Afar and killed 85 of them. Nearly 200 were wounded in the blast.

What followed was a chilling example of Iraq's gruesome tit-for-tat communal killings in which government security forces have been at least complicit.

A group of armed men, many of them police officers, went on a rampage in a Sunni district of the town and killed 75 Sunni Arab men, dragging them out of their homes and executing them in the street with a gunshot to the head.

Grief-struck women and relatives of the dead men were further dissuaded from obtaining death certificates by local Shiite authorities in Tal Afar hospital and had to rush to the provincial capital of Mosul for the certification before they buried the victims on the outskirts of the town.

AFP

A MAN looks for his son among the bodies of bomb blast victims outside a morgue in Baghdad March 29. Suicide bombers killed some 125 people in a market in a Shiite district on Thursday. REUTERS

Defying Bush, Senate bill calls for Iraq pullout

WASHINGTON—ISSUING A STINGING challenge to President Bush, the US Senate on Thursday approved a spending measure that provided more than $97.5 billion for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan but ordered troop withdrawals from Iraq to begin within 120 days and set a goal of removing most armed forces within a year.

Democrats, preparing for a veto fight, immediately sought to paint the president as obstinate in the face of broad public sentiment against the war. They said he would be the one abandoning US forces should he reject a final bill that lawmakers expected to produce in a few weeks.

"If the president vetoes this bill, it is an asterisk in history," said Sen. Harry Reid of Nevada, the majority leader, after a vote of 51-47 on the measure. "He sets the record for undermining the troops more than any president we have ever had."

But Bush was not wavering. He stood on the North Portico of the White House, flanked by Republican House leaders, and delivered his veto threat one more time.

"We stand united in saying loud and clear that when we've got a troop in harm's way, we expect that troop to be fully funded," he said.

Reid promised that negotiators would quickly begin to reconcile the new Senate measure with a version passed by the House last week and have a bill ready to be approved and sent to the president soon after the House returned from its spring break on April 16.

NYT

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Morales tells Pacman: Be wary of Solis

By June Navarro

MORALES

A PRICELESS TIP FOR MANNY Pacquiao from a man who had come face to face with Jorge Solis in the ring: Don't take him for granted.

This advice came from Erik Morales, whom Pacquiao defeated in a thrilling WBC super featherweight fight in Las Vegas last year.

Morales revealed that Solis was one of his spar mates while preparing against Pacquiao in 2005.

"He's (Solis) a good fighter," said Morales yesterday in an interview on the 25th floor of the Diamond Hotel in Manila, where the Mexican star held a mini press conference.

"He (Solis) is fast and strong, so Manny needs to take him seriously."

But Morales revealed a weakness that Pacquiao could pounce on.

"There's only one problem—his fighting spirit," said Morales of his countryman. "He gives up easily in a tough fight."

Morales is in the country for a series of promotional gimmicks for San Miguel Beer.

Pacquiao will stake his WBC International super featherweight title against the unbeaten Solis on April 14 at the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

Asked if he has a prediction on the Pacquiao-Solis fight, Morales said: "I don't have any. No prediction."

Morales also feels that there is nothing more in store for him in the super featherweight division.

After tucking three world championships under his belt, Morales is now moving up to the 135-pound division in a bid to become the first fighter to capture four boxing titles in different weight categories.

De Guzman snares Thai Ladies crown

DE GUZMAN

BANGKOK—REGAN de Guzman completed a championship sweep for the Philippines, firing a one-under-par 71 yesterday to capture the individual crown in the 17th Thailand Ladies Amateur Open Golf Championship at the President Country Club here.

The long-hitting De Guzman, who turned 15 only last month, parred No. 18 in regulation from five feet to secure a one-stroke victory over Malaysian Ainil Abubakar.

The stirring triumph came after Dottie Ardina and Mia Piccio won the team event for the Philippines on Thursday.

De Guzman, a member of the Nike developmental team handled by Abe Rosal, finished the 54-hole tournament with a four-under-par 212, counting her earlier rounds of 69 and 72.

Abubakar capped a 69 with a birdie to settle for second place with 213 while Ikeda turned in a tournament-best 67 for third with 214.

Ardina ballooned to a 76 and finished at 216, four shots behind De Guzman.

De Guzman became the second Filipino to win the event after LPGA campaigner Jennifer Rosales won it in 1994.

She also returned a favor to the Thais following Yupaporn Kawinpakorn's victory in the Philippine Ladies Open last January.

"I think the Thais are in shock," De Guzman's mother, Tet, told the INQUIRER. "The (RP) girls just showed the depth of our talent pool."

The Philippines' big showing here came on the heels of an impressive stint in the Queen Sirikit Cup, where Ardina, De Guzman and Crystal Superal led the country to its best-ever second-place finish.

De Guzman, Ardina, Abubakar and the late-charging Ikeda were actually tied for the lead at two-under after 12 holes. But Ardina bowed out first with bogeys on Nos. 13 and 14 while Ikeda flubbed makeable birdie putts to reel back as De Guzman and Abubakar birdied No. 14 to stay on top.

Then after the Malaysian bogeyed the 16th, De Guzman took a two-shot lead with a birdie on the 17th. *With a report from Jong Arcano*

Sidelights 18th Mitsubishi Lancer International Junior Tennis Championship

World-class tennis action at the

For the past couple of days, a spate of upsets rocked the girls' singles division at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. What could have been a final match between twins failed to materialize when Ukrainian sisters Nadiya and Lyudmyla Kichenok bowed out in the second and third round respectively.

Fifth-seeded Nadia was the first to bow out after absorbing a 3-6, 7-5, 3-6 loss against Vivienne Vierin of Italy in the second round of the lower bracket which happened last Wednesday. Lyudmyla on the other hand, bowed out of the tournament last Thursday.

Nonetheless, the twin sisters are still competing in the doubles group where they are seeded third. They barged into the quarterfinals with a 6-3, 2-6, 6-2 decision over the Japanese pair of Ai Yamamoto and Akita Shiro.

It was a sad day for the Philippines yesterday as the last local survivors failed to advance in the tournament brackets. Thirteenth seed Kyle Joshua Dandan lost to Slovakain Borut Puc 3-6, 3-6. Fellow Filipino Dennise Dy is also out of the tournament after a 4-6, 6-0, 2-6 loss to Chang Kai-Chen of Taiwan in the distaff side.

Prior to the Lancer tournament, Dy was a singles champion in the Thailand Open. She also won a doubles title in the aforementioned tournament along with her Fil-German partner Anja Vanessa Peters.

Final matches will be aired on Solar Sports, April 8, 5:00pm – 7:00pm.
Replay on April 14, 10:00am -12:00pm

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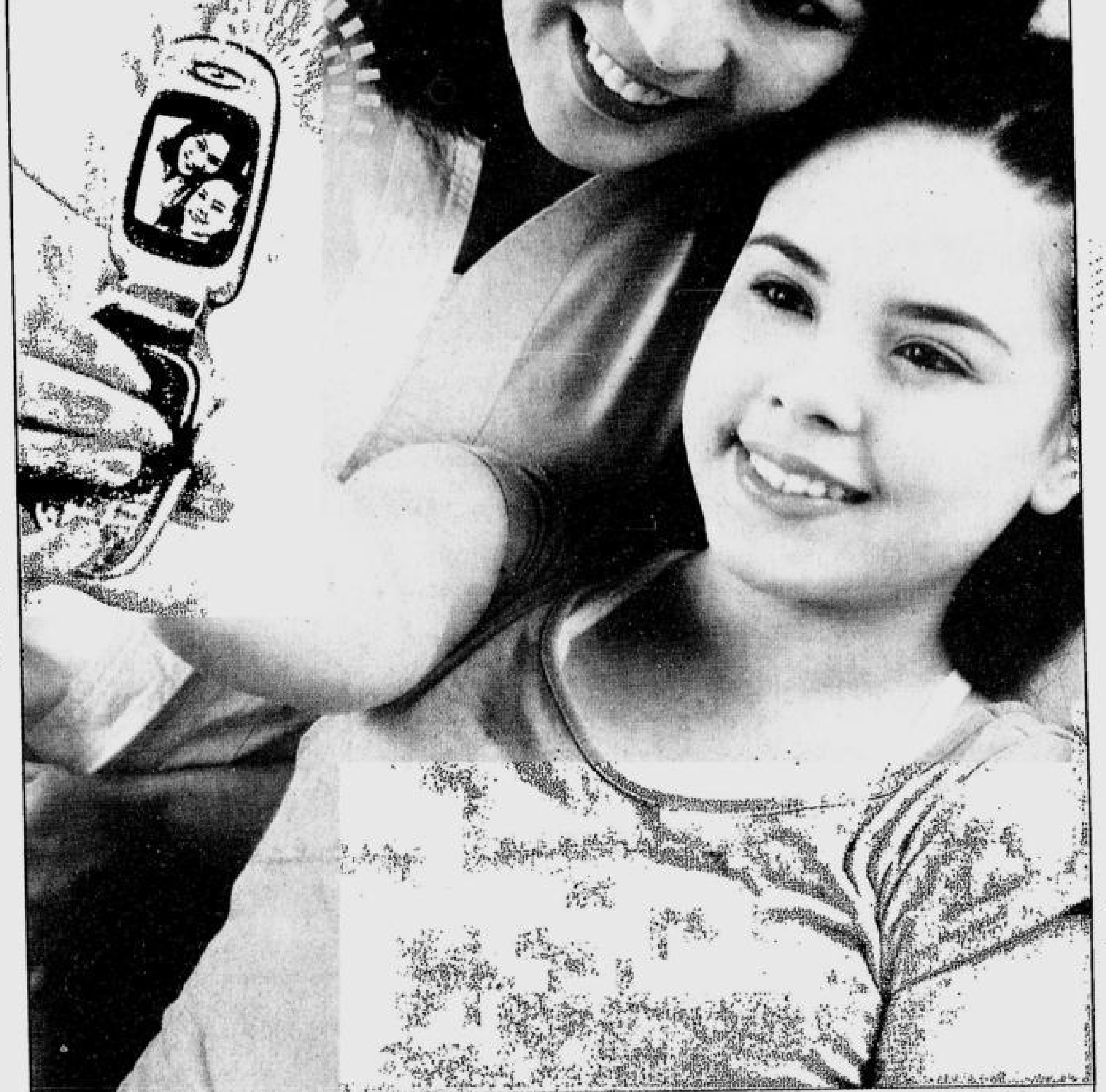

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Dy, Dandan get door in Lancer net q'finals

GIRLS' top seed Sacha Jones puts everything behind a forehand before bowing to Hong Kong's Zhang Ling.
RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

TWICE IN THE DECIDING SET, FRUSTRATED, she slammed her racket on the ground.

As the lone Filipino left standing, Denise Dy could not hold her nerve and she bowed to Chinese Taipei's Chang Kai-chen, 6-4, 0-6, 6-2, putting an end to the Philippines' singles campaign in the 18th Mitsubishi Lancer international junior tennis championship.

"She's not an easy foe," the ninth-ranked Dy admitted after yesterday's match at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. "There were simple errors that I shouldn't have made."

Earlier in the day, Kyle Joshua Dandan's performance foreshadowed the Philippines' dismal fate as the 13th seed absorbed a 6-2, 6-3 loss to unseeded Borut Puc of Slovakia.

"I couldn't break his aces, I couldn't return his serves," said the 17-year-old Dandan. "He played very well—that's not his usual game."

The 16-year-old Chang will take on Australia's Tyra Calderwood in today's semifinals, while Hong Kong's Zhang Ling and Canada's Anne Voicu clash in the other girls' pairing.

Puc, however, faces a tougher foe in top-ranked John Patrick Smith of Australia. Croatia's Silvio Daidic, also unseeded, battles No. 12 Bernard Tomic of Australia in the other semifinal.

Dy, a Fil-American based in San Jose, California, pounded the third-seeded Chang with her ground strokes as she battled back from a set down, 6-0, to force a decider.

"In the second set, I was just too excited," said Chang. "I wanted to win too fast."

Dy and Dandan, though, averted a wipe out by pulling off victories with their foreign partners to land in the doubles semifinals.

The tandem of Dandan and Japan's Tadayuki Longhi outclassed the Thai pair of Peraikat Siriluetaiwat and Kittipong Wachiramanowong, 6-2, 6-4, while Dy partnered with Indonesia's Jessy Rompies to dispose of Sacha Jones of New Zealand and Russia's Elena Chernykova, 6-4, 6-1.

In girls' singles, the eighth-ranked Zhang pulled off the biggest upset by ousting Jones, the tournament top seed, 6-4, 7-6 (5).

Calderwood disposed Hong Kong's Zijun Yang, 2-6, 6-2; 6-3, while Voicu turned back Australia's Brittany Sheed, 7-6 (5), 5-7, 6-2.

Upsets also highlighted the boys' singles with Daidic stunning No. 2 Stephen Donald of Australia, 6-4, 4-6, 7-5, and Tomic besting fourth seed Wachirannowong, 6-3, 2-6, 6-4.

Smith, the only surviving top 10 bet, ousted Australia's Andrew Thomas, 6-3, 1-0 (ret.)

Riviera bets rule 2 of 3 Jungolf Interclub divisions

The standings

Group I—707 ICSTI 1, 707 Riviera (ICTSI prevailed in a countback), 714 Aguinaldo, 734 Valley, 738 Eagle Ridge, 742 ICSTI 2, 808 Northwoods, 815 Valley, 830 JAY 2

Group II—745 Riviera, 750 Aguinaldo 3, 756 Northwoods 2, 789 La Salle , 812 Valley 1, 870 Aguinaldo, 875 Valley 2, 889 Northwoods 2, 916 Northwoods 4

Group III—649 Riviera 3, 766 Valley

WITH ANDIE UNSON SPARKING A FINAL-DAY RALLY in Division 2, Riviera emerged the most dominant team by winning two of the three team trophies and three of six individual titles in the Jungolf Interclub tournament at the Mt. Malarayat Golf and Country Club in Lipa City.

Unson saved her best for last as the former US Kids world champion added a 77 to the 79 of AR Ramos and the 84 of Daniel Ekegrn for Riviera's 240 for the day and 745 aggregate, five shots ahead of runner-up Aguinaldo 3 which had 248-750.

Riviera's fourth player, Mark Anthony Arevalo, did not count with his 89 in the four-to-play, three-to-count format of this kickoff leg of the Jungolf Summer Circuit.

Riviera's Division 3 team, made up of Mia Legaspi, Abby Arevalo, Pauline del Rosario and Angelo Jose Ballesteros, routed Valley, 649-766.

The Silang, Cavite-based team could have scored a sweep if it not for its loss in Division 1 via a countback.

ICTSI 1 and Riviera ended up with similar 707 totals but ICTSI prevailed in the countback due to a better last-day score, 235-237.

Wolen Superal carded a 73, Bino dela Paz had a 75 and Sonny Villaber tallied an 87 for the winning ICSTI team. John Kier Abdon led the Riviera team with a 73 while Beverly Mendoza and Maan Legaspi submitted identical 82s.

Sonny Villaber scored a 75 and JR Quiachon also had a 75 to give ICTSI a 223-463.

Winning individual titles for Riviera were Abdon, Unson and Legaspi. Abdon, who sizzled with a 66 in the first round highlighted by an ace on the par-4 seventh hole, beat Superal by 14 in boys' Division 1; Unson edged Anne Sabater in girls' Division 2 and Legaspi (202) proved too hot for Arevalo (220) in Division 3.

Sarah Jane Ababa of ICSTI 2 beat Mendoza by two, 242-244, in girls' Division 1, RJ Tallud of Northwoods finished four up on Miggy Yee, 229-233, in boys' Division 2 and Lanz Uy, Ryan Monsalve and Raniel Santos completed a 1-2-3 finish for Valley in boys Division 3.

US Pro Tour: Django wins, Bata falters

FORMER WORLD NO.1 FRANCISCO "Django" Bustamante dumped American Mike Davis, 11-4, Thursday to post his second straight win in the US Pro Tour Championships at the Normandie Casino in Los Angeles, California.

But pool maestro Efren "Bata" Reyes and US based-Filipino Santos Sambajon were not as fortunate as they dropped their respective second-round matches.

The 52-year-old Reyes, who opened his title bid with an 11-1 rout of Neal Fujiawara, narrowly lost to Ronnie Wiseman, 11-10, and fell into the losers' bracket.

Bustamante, 11-1 victor over James Burt of the United States in the opener, will face Tony Crosby in the third round of the winners' bracket. After a first-round bye, Crosby ripped Richard Broumpton, 11-1.

Reyes, the 1999 World Pool 9-ball champion, fights for life against Japanese Tomoki Mikari in the next round of the event where the champion pockets $10,000.

Sambajon beat Dan Burdick, 11-2, but then yielded to five-time world champion Johnny Archer, 11-8. He bowed out of the tournament after losing to Max Eberle, 11-3.

Other noted players who remained in the win column were Thorsten Hohmann, Mikka Immonen, Corey Deuel, Gabe Owen, Shin Park, Ernesto Dominguez, Robb Saez, Shawn Putnam, Fabio Petroni, Charlie Bryant, Tyler Edey and Raj Hundal.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Pagadian five blasts Gensan for 3rd victory

PAGADIAN CITY—PLAYING MORE COMFORTably at home, the Pagadian Explorers blasted MP Pacman Gensan, 84-71, Thursday to remain within striking distance of joint leaders Tagaytay Spring Cooking Oil and Valencia in the 2007 NBC National Cup basketball tournament here.

Pagadian's twin towers, Erian Daja and Melvin Mamaclay, poured in 23 points apiece as Mayor Sammy Co's Explorers led from start to finish to post their straight win after dropping their first game to Spring in the NBC opener in Lucena City.

World Boxing champion Manny Pacquiao's Warriors suffered their fourth loss in five games. Only Rolly Menor performed well for MP Pacman Gensan, scoring a season-high 31 points.

"Finally, the team is beginning to jell," said playing coach Peter Naron. "Si Erian (Daja) at Melvin (Mamaclay) *talaga and inaasahan ko*."

Daja also hauled down 14 rebounds while Mamaclay fell two boards short of another double-double performance.

The scores:

PAGADIAN 84—Daja 23, Mamaclay 23, Orquillas 9, Villaver 6, Saludsod 6, Cortez 5, Quilo 4, Singedas 2, Sinco 2, Arquiro 2, Ayuk 2, Huelar 2, Unabia 0, Pamaran 0.

GENSAN 71—Menor 31, Medalla 9, Recustodio 7, Ramos 7, Calo 4, Coronado 3, Tadena 2, Mejorada 2, Celiz 2, Sumampong 0, Locsin 0, Farochilan 0.

Quarters: 28-23, 47-38, 68-51, 84-71

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Tiu out to beat new drag record

TEAM ERE'S JONATHAN Tiu sets out to raise the bar higher today as the country's finest speed devils battle it out anew in the second leg of the Shell Helix Grand Prix 2007-San Mig Coffee Philippine Drag Racing Championship at the Batangas Racing Circuit Drag Strip.

After setting an eye-popping new record time of 10.653 seconds in the kickoff leg three weeks ago, Tiu is the prohibitive favorite to rule the premier Quick 8 division of the 120-car competition.

He will be up against equally capable rivals, including Mato Tan of Matonetics, who topped Tiu's old record thrice before settling for second place. Tan has a personal-best 10.726 secs.

BRC drag racing director Fil Gulfin said they will strictly implement safety requirements, such as the wearing of racing suits, helmets and other safety gear.

The semifinal round of the Pro division, rained out the last time, will resume today.

Also favored in the other divisions are privateer Sherwin Esguerra and Romeo Manuel Jr. of Pit 21.

SPORTSWATCH

60 tiffs in LPC derby today

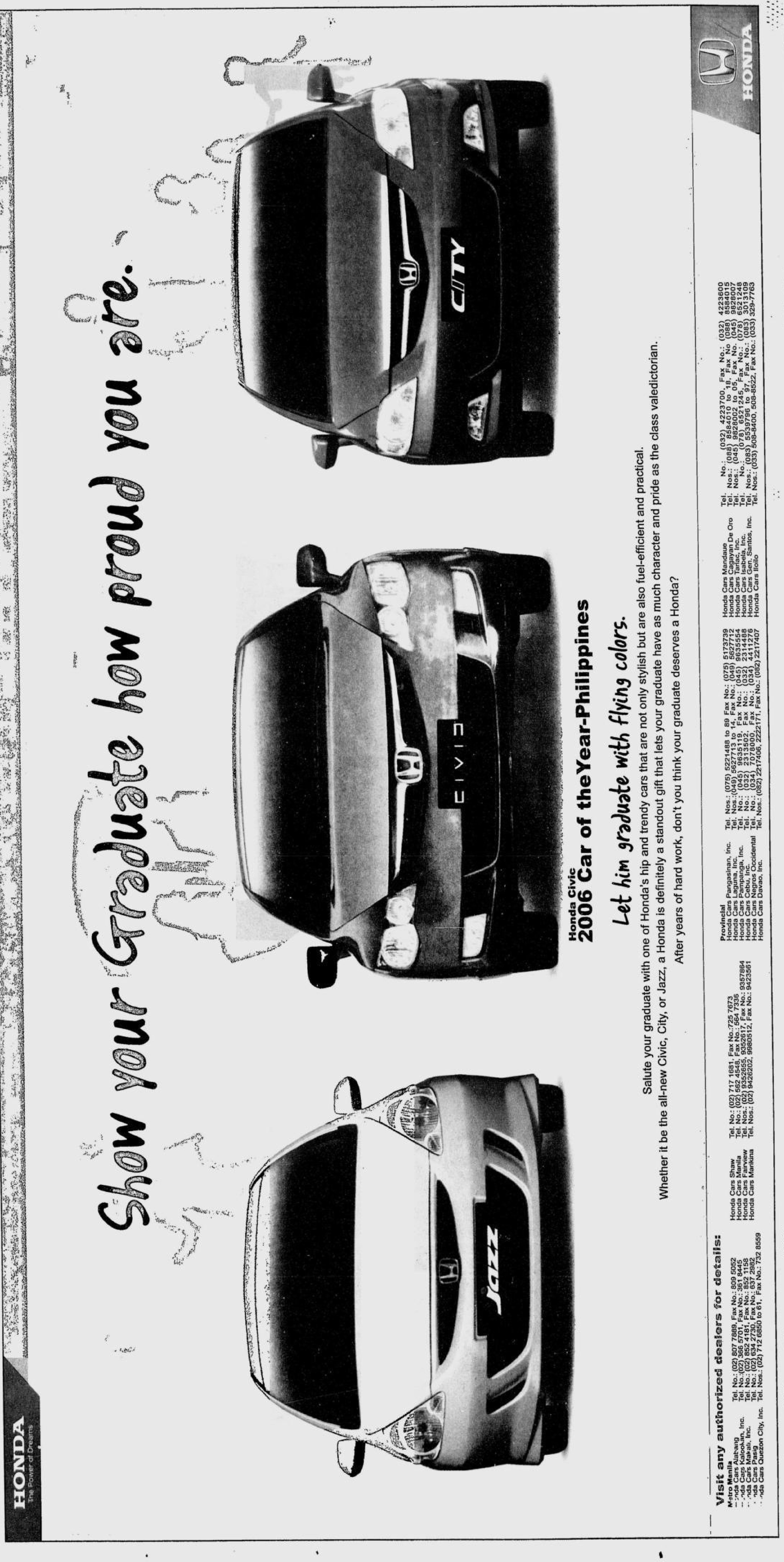
SOME SIXTY FIGHTS spice up the battle for the championship of a special 3-cock derby at Las Piñas Coliseum today. Maruel Terroblas of Las Piñas (Scat JM), Ariel Uy of Elorde Stadium and Toto Arnold of Pasay have banded together to stage the 40-entry derby. Entries must be submitted from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040 or 874-3910. Meanwhile, 121 entries vied in last Thursday's LPC Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan won by the Jhezil Farms entry of Jover Dilao which posted the fastest winning time of 10.20 seconds.

Makati 5-cock event kicks off

A GUARANTEED PRIZE of P1 million is at stake in the Fiscalizer 5-Cock Derby kicking off today with more than 80 fights on tap at the Makati Coliseum. Derby heavyweights such as Jorge "Nene" Araneta, who will field two entries (Thunderbird I and II), Bicol cocker Butch Inonog and Jun Gayoso are seeing action at the venue for the first time. The derby is sponsored by B-Meg Derby,Ace and Gran Matador. The tough field also includes world champion Boy de Roca, Louie Cua, Boy Royo and Gov. Ito Ynares.

Lagba holds first meeting

THE GENERAL MEMbership meeting of the newly formed Laguna Gamefowl Breeders Association (Lagba) will be held at 11 a.m. today at the Max's Restaurant in San Pablo City. The group, founded by Sonny Lagon, who owns the Blue Blade Game Farm, is fully backed by gamefowl health and nutrition industry leader Thunderbird Power Feeds and Univet. Lagba has also been officially recognized by the National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders, enabling its members to compete in the ₱15-million Bakbakan 2007 National 10-Stag Derby



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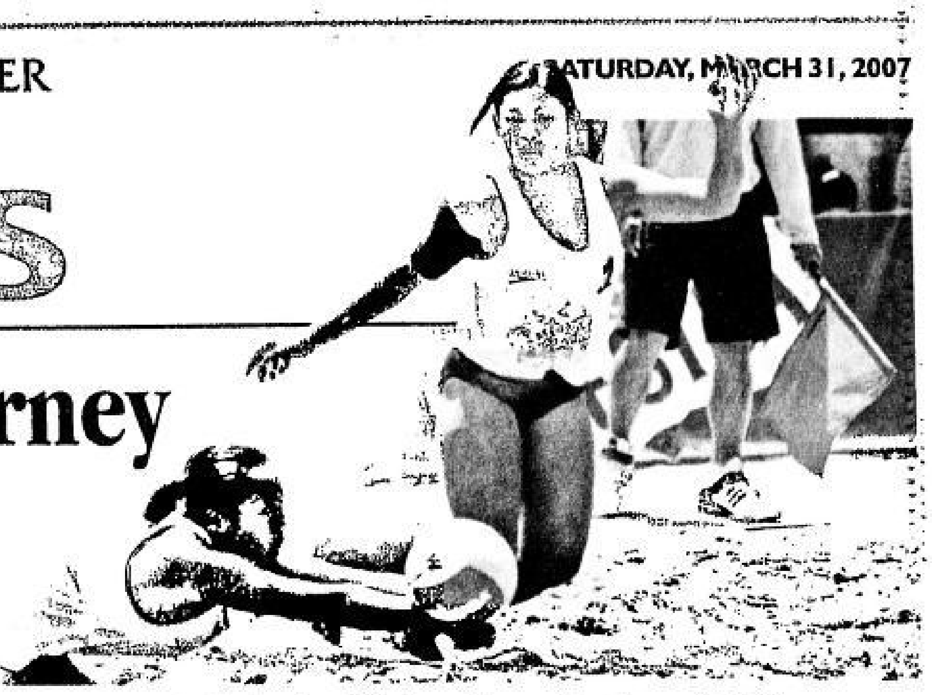
Duo Boracay-bound after long journey



MYLIN Que of the University of Mindanao Tagum dives to save the ball as teammate Liezl Manatad looks on. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

By June Navarro

IT TOOK A 50-HOUR BOAT RIDE FROM one of the most remote islands in the country down south for Jay-Ar Aping and Gabriel Usman of Tawi-Tawi Regional Agricultural College to get to this tournament.

They certainly didn't want to pack their bags in a huff.

Aping and Usman survived Mahardika Institute of Technology's Mursaid Hadjiruk and Mohammed Alih Maih, 17-21, 21-19, 17-15, yesterday at the La Salle Greenhills sand court and advanced to the 2007 Nestea Beach Volley championships in Boracay Island.

"We don't intend to lose after traveling for more than two days at sea," said Usman in Filipino. The two took a ferry from Tawi-Tawi bound for Zamboanga City before arriving in Manila last Tuesday afternoon.

Usman also explained that they had shelled out at least P20,000 just to compete for the Mindanao eliminations of this event. Usman and Aping also spent P3,600 each for the boat fare.

They will now join Gabshar Tahiluddin and Yusop Abdulkarim of Mindanao State University Tawi-Tawi and Capitol University's Orpheus Cubillas and Kiven Escobal in the Boracay Finals on April 19-21.

Tahiluddin and Abdulkarim emerged as the top qualifiers for the region after outplaying Cubillas and Escobal, 21-12, 21-17.

On the distaff side, Liezl Manatad and Mylin Que from University of Mindanao Tagum defeated Holy Cross of Davao College's Carren Desierto and Dolly Penaflorida, 21-17, 21-18, in the women's finale.

University of Mindanao Davao's Maricel Cabus and Janice Arnaiz also booked a trip to Boracay after booting out Lina Gampong and Mayeta Tan of Mindanao State University Tawi-Tawi, 21-13, 21-19.

Hinrich powers Bulls to playoffs

CHICAGO—KIRK HINRICH SANK TWO late free throws to secure a fourth straight victory for the Chicago Bulls, An 83-81 home triumph over the short-handed Detroit Pistons on Thursday.

Hinrich missed his first of three free throws after being fouled by Detroit's Carlos Delfino on a three-point shot with two seconds remaining, but he made the next two to enable the Bulls to clinch their third straight playoff berth.

"It's a good spot to be in," Bulls coach Scott Skiles told reporters. "We can focus on what seed we're going to get rather than making it."

Regular Detroit starters Richard Hamilton and Chris Webber missed the game because of illness, but the Eastern Conference-leading Pistons almost pulled off the win.

They rallied from a 12-point fourth-quarter deficit to tie the score at 81-81 on Tayshaun Prince's field goal with nine seconds remaining.

Hinrich then put the Bulls out front before Prince, who had 26 points for Detroit, missed with the final shot of the contest as the buzzer sounded.

Ben Gordon scored 25 points for the Bulls with Ben Wallace, who previously played for the Pistons, grabbing 19 rebounds.

"I'm going to be doing the same thing in the playoffs that I'm doing now," Wallace told reporters.

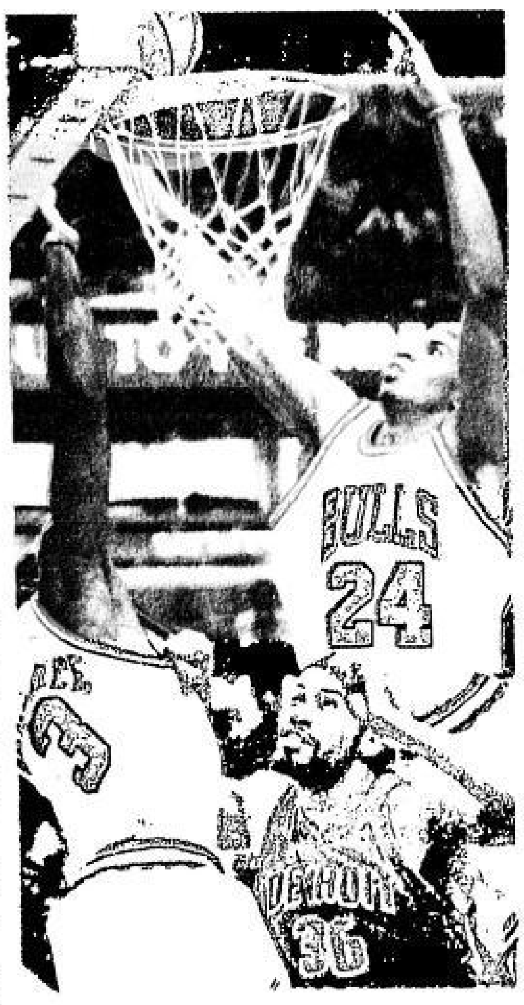
"And when you talk about the Bulls, we should be mentioned as a team and not an individual. I'm glad to see the focus start to shift that way."

The victory was the 11th in 14 games for the Bulls, who trail the Pistons by three games in the conference race. They are a half-game behind second-place Cleveland.

Jason Richardson scored 36 points, including eight three-pointers, and the Golden State Warriors surprised the Phoenix Suns, 124-119, in Oakland, California.

Tarance Kinsey's 20 points paced Memphis to its second straight West Coast win, a 96-92 road victory over the Portland Trail Blazers. Zach Randolph had 43 points and 17 rebounds for Portland. *Reuters*

GAME TODAY (*Basketball TV*)
10 a.m.—Denver vs. Phoenix
(replays @ 4 & 9:30 p.m.)



THE CHICAGO frontline of Tyrus Thomas (right) and Ben Wallace (left) leave Detroit forward Rasheed Wallace sandwiched in a rebound play. AP

Lochte upsets Piersol with record finish

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—OVERshadowed by bigger names on the US men's team, Ryan Lochte emerged in his own right with a stunning world record in the 200-meter backstroke at the world swimming championships Friday. Lochte beat Aaron Peirsol, the world's dominant backstroker who hadn't lost a 200 internationally since the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Until Friday, Lochte was best known at this meet as the goofball who flashed a gold, silver and diamond-crusted grill in his mouth on the victory stand after the 200 individual medley. His teammates had dared him to wear the accessory created by his dentist in Daytona Beach, Florida. But he was all business against Peirsol, the world and Olympic champion. Peirsol was under his own world-record pace through 150 meters. He and Lochte went stroke-for-stroke over the last 50 meters. Lochte touched the wall in 1 minute, 54.32 seconds. That erased Peirsol's old mark of 1:54.44 set last year. Peirsol finished second in 1:54.80. Lochte leaped in the water, a huge grin spreading across his face before he and Peirsol embraced across the lane ropes. Markus Rogan of Austria earned the bronze. *AP*

Williams, Henin dispute Sony championship

KEY BISCAYNE, FLORIDA—SERENA WILLIAMS BEAT THE BEST THE ISRAELI Army had to offer. Shahar Peer, a 19-year-old corporal, kept things close for an hour before Williams pulled away, winning, 7-6 (4), 6-1, Thursday night for a berth in the final at the Sony Ericsson Open. One test remains this week for the rejuvenated Williams: a revival Saturday of her long-dormant rivalry with Justine Henin. The Belgian reached the Key Biscayne final for the first time by beating Anna Chakvetadze, 6-2, 6-3. Henin versus Williams was once a fierce rivalry, but they haven't met since the 2003 Wimbledon semifinals. Williams has won five of their eight meetings, including two of three in Grand Slam events. Williams struggled early against the 14th-seeded Peer. In the first set Williams returned poorly, struggled with her backhand and failed to break serve. She said she was bothered by a sore left knee. Big serves kept Williams in the set. She won 12 consecutive service points to stay even, took a 4-1 lead in the tiebreaker and closed out the set with a service winner. *AP*

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IN THIS ISSUE

- **Napocor** plant auction deferred /B2
- **Chinese firm** bags $262-M govt e-network deal /B3

RP to get $600-M yearly loan from WB

By Doris C. Dumlao

FOR AS LONG AS THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT sticks to its economic reform agenda, the country is assured of an annual soft loan package of $600 million from the World Bank.

In a joint briefing yesterday with the Department of Finance on the signing of a tax administration program, visiting World Bank regional vice president James Adams complimented the government for undertaking fiscal reforms.

He said that the measures have resulted in three straight years of economic growth of about 5 percent, and a sharp improvement in the tax effort, or revenues as a percentage of gross domestic product.

"If we go three years back, (World Bank) assistance (to the

RP TO GET/ B2

Repayments caused foreign debt to drop 1.5% in '06

THE COUNTRY'S FOREIGN debt stock eased by 1.5 percent to $53.4 billion at the end of 2006 from the $54.2 billion posted the previous year as repayments topped fresh borrowings.

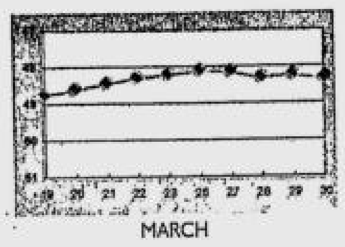
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday reported that the yearend figure was also 1.3 percent lower than the $54.1 billion registered at the end of September.

"The decline in external debt stock resulted from net repayments by both bank and non-bank borrowers, which totaled more than $766 million during the fourth quarter, or nearly $1.3 billion for the whole year," Tetangco said in a

REPAYMENTS/ B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



MARCH

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P48.28 = $1

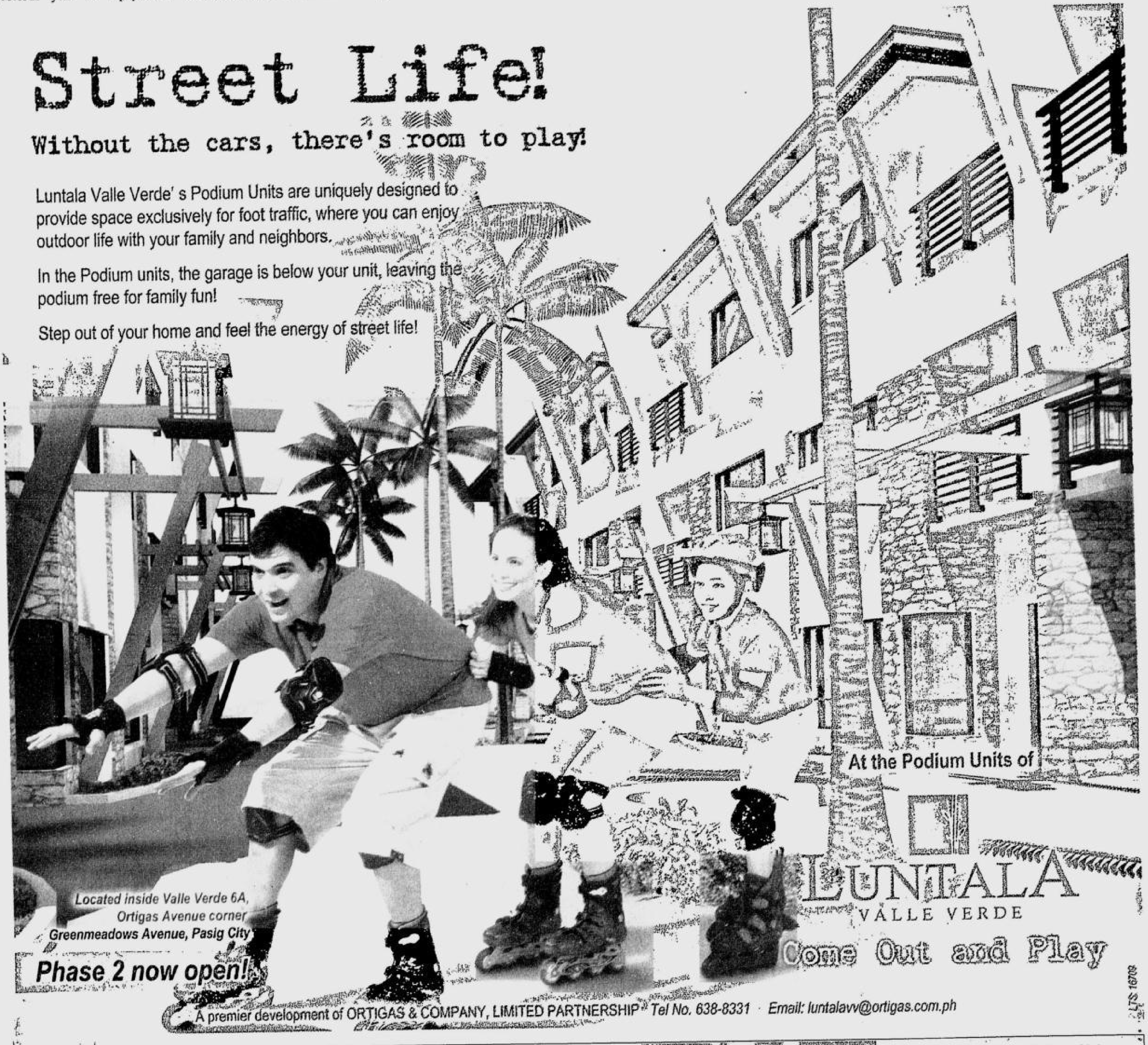
As of 5 p.m., March 30, 2007

Shares close up 1.64%

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 1.64 percent higher, lifted by a rebound on Wall Street and end of quarter window dressing, dealers said.

The composite index rose 51.83 points to 3,203.55 after moving between 3,151.72 and 3,208.96.

The broader all-share index climbed 29.78 points to 2,046.76. Gainers edged out losers 74 to 39, while 53 stocks were unchanged. Volume was 5.5 billion shares worth P7.57 billion ($157.19 million). AFP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Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Region IV - A CALABARZON
DIVISION OF ANTIPOLO CITY

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY TO BID

The Department of Education, Division of Antipolo City, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for:

NAME OF THE PROJECT	Supply and Delivery of Elementary Tables & Chairs Elementary & Secondary Armchairs and Teacher's Tables & Chairs
ABC & FUNDING SOURCE	Funding Source is the Government of the Philippines CY 2006 GAA (75% Allocation of the DepEd Desk/Armchair Project)
CONTRACT DURATION	One Hundred Twenty (120) Calendar Days
DELIVERY SITES	"Door to door" delivery to various recipient schools (See Schedule of requirements of the Bidding Documents

LOT	DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	ABC (Php)
A	Elementary Table and Chairs (All Wood)	825	1,650,000.00
	Teacher's Table and Chair (All Wood)	33	151,800.00
B	Elementary Armchairs for Grades 5 to 6 (All Wood)	1,305	1,017,900.00
	Teacher's Table and Chair (All Wood)	25	115,000.00
C	Secondary Armchairs (All Wood)	950	741,000.00
	Teacher's Table and Chair (All Wood)	19	87,400.00
	TOTAL		3,763,100.00

Activity	Date	Venue
1. Pre-bid Conference	April 10, 2007	Office of the ASDS OIC G/F Garcia Type Bldg., DepED Compound Tel 630-3722 630-6854 630-3421
2. Deadline of Submission of Bids	April 25, 2007	Division Office Conference Room 2/F Garcia Type Bldg., DepED Compound Tel 630-3722, 630-6854, 630-3421
3. Opening of Bids	April 25, 2007	Division Office Conference Room 2/F Garcia Type Bldg., DepED Compound Tel 630-3722, 630-6854, 630-3421

The Bidding Documents shall be available at the BAC Secretariat Office DepED Division of Antipolo City starting on March 27, 2007 to April 4, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable amount of Philippine Pesos, Two Thousand Only (Php2,000.00).

Bidding shall be conducted in accordance with procedures under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of R.A. 9184 otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. Information is also available at http://www.deped.gov.ph or www.procurementservice.gov.ph or call DepED Division of Antipolo City at telefax Numbers: 630-3722, 630-6854, 630-3421

The Department of Education reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) REMEDIOS G. AQUINO, Ed.D.
OIC-Office of the ASDS ES I-Science
BAC Chairperson

(PDI—March 30, 31; April 1, 2, 3, 4 & 7, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR REVIEW/EVALUATION AND APPROVAL OF THE CAPITAL PROJECTS FOR YEAR 2006, WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2007-086 RC

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC., (ZAMCELCO),
Petitioner,
x--------------------------------x

DOCKETED
Date: MAR 27 2007
By:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on March 13, 2007, the Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc., (ZAMCELCO) filed a petition for review/evaluation and approval of its capital projects for year 2006, with prayer for provisional authority.

In the said petition, ZAMCELCO seeks the review and approval of the following Capital Projects amounting to PhP161,870,398.00:

	Project Description		Project Cost
A.	EXPANSION PROJECTS IN VARIOUS SITIOS AND BARANGAY IN ZAMBOANGA CITY		
1.	Single Phase Line Extension Cansilayen-Bunguiao Work Order #2k5-093FA	PhP	2,111,965.88
2.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Purok 6, Lapakan, Zamboanga City		1,744,621.94
3.	Single Phase Line Extension@ Santol, Lumbangan, Zamboanga City		1,076,086.18
4.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Lumayang, Zamboanga City		2,092,074.30
5.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Sitio Sapa Moro, Latuan, Zamboanga City		1,934,821.38
6.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Papaya, Pamucutan, Zamboanga City		1,874,229.60
7.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Baluno, Salaan Per Approved Workplan 2006		2,294,131.53
8.	Installation/Construction of Single Phase Line at La Paz-Camp Susana		1,651,408.24
9.	Construction of Double Circuit Line and Line Completion Single Phase to Three Phase from San Jose Gusu Substation to San Roque		1,902,022.99
10.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Apasan, Bolong		949,696.50
11.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Edding, Lapakan		1,060,425.01
12.	Single Phase Line Extension @ Camias, Curuan		1,671,553.79
13.	Three Phase Dedicated Line @ Baliwasan Seaside		1,088,602.45
	Sub-total – Expansion Project	PhP	22,071,640.00
B.	REHAB/REVAMP PROJECT		
14.	Upgrading of Line @ Urban Poor, Tumaga		948,697.52
C.	REHAB/UPGRADING PROJECTS		
15.	Procurement of Kwhr meters for the Meter-On Pole Project		54,000,000.00
16.	Procurement of 35 Ft steel Pole, 200 pcs.		3,000,000.00
17.	Procurement of 35 Ft Concrete Pole, 200 pcs.		2,500,000.00
18.	Procurement of 45 Ft Concrete Pole, 200 pcs.		3,700,000.00
19.	Procurement of Current Outdoor Transformer, 400/300/200:5 Type: GIFT 24-10; 81 units		4,615,834.00
20.	Procurement of Power Transformer Ratio: 8400/120V Type VZF 24-03, 81 units		4,711,997.00
21.	Vacuum Circuit Breaker, Type: 15-GMI-500-1200-12; 2 units		3,000,000.00
	Sub-total	PhP	75,527,831.00
22.	Purchase/Procurement of 1 unit 20 MVA Power Transformer to Replace the 21 MVA Power Transformer w/c got busted due to Lighting strike		30,000,000.00
23.	Emergency Repair of the 5 MVA Power Transformer at Recodo Substation		10,642,000.00
24.	Emergency Repair of the 5 MVA Power Transformer at Ayala Substation		1,642,000.00
25.	Emergency Repair of the 21 MVA Power Transformer at San Jose Gusu Substation		7,721,675.00
26.	Emergency Repair of the 10 MVA Power Transformer of Cabatangan Substation		1,780,219.54
27.	Logistic Support - Procurement/Purchase of service vehicles, mobile Radios and tools for lineman's use; computers and Accessories; hand-held computer for meter readers		11,536,335.00
	GRAND TOTAL	PhP	161,870,398.00

The Commission has set the petition for initial hearing and pre-trial conference on:

1. **April 16, 2007 (Monday), at one o'clock to three o'clock in the afternoon (1:00 to 3:00 p.m.)** at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City.
2. **May 10, 2007, (Thursday) at nine o'clock in the morning to four o'clock in the afternoon** (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City; and
3. **May 21, 2007 (Monday), at one o'clock to four o'clock in the afternoon (1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.)** at the Executive Hall, Garden Orchid Hotel, Gov. Camins Avenue, Zamboanga City.

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address, (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the petition or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the petitioner concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the petition may request the petitioner, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the petition. The petitioner is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the petition and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the petition and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.**, Chairman, and the Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN**, and **JOSE C. REYES** Energy Regulatory Commission, this 28th day of March, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director III

(PDI - March 31, 2007)

Reinsurance firm to hold IPO

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION and the Philippine Stock Exchange have approved the plan of National Reinsurance Corp. of the Philippines (National Re) to pursue its proposed maiden public offering in April, which will raise between P2.1 billion and P2.9 billion.

Documents filed with the SEC showed that National Re will offer a total of 638 million shares. Of this, 489.49 million shares will be new common shares priced at between P3.36 and P4.62 per share. The remaining 148.5 million will be treasury shares that were acquired from various stockholders who sold their holdings following National Re's merger with Universal Malayan Reinsurance Corp. in March 2006.

The firm's lead underwriter can exercise an option to purchase up to 103.9 million shares within 30 days from listing date.

Documents filed with the PSE showed that National Re would set its offer price on April 12 and hold a domestic roadshow and investors briefing on April 10. The offer period will be from April 16 to April 20, while the listing date was set for April 27.

BDO Capital & Investment Corp. was tapped as issue manager and lead underwriter.

Reinsurance is an arrangement where an insurance company transfers part or all of its risk of loss under insurance policies to another insurance company.

National Re is controlled by three major stockholders that hold 24-percent stake each—the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Bank of the Philippine Islands Group and the Malayan Group.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

Napocor plant auction deferred

Preparations underway to sell Calaca for third time

By Abigail L. Ho

POWER SECTOR ASSETS AND liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has pushed back to the fourth quarter the bidding for the 200-megawatt (MW) decommissioned Manila Thermal Power Plant, as it prepares to auction off big-ticket coal-fired power plants in the second half.

In a statement issued yesterday, PSALM said it was currently reviewing the structure of and process for the sale of Manila Thermal and other retired National Power Corp. plants.

PSALM earlier said five investor groups, all from the steel manufacturing and construction industries, were keen on bidding for the retired power facility.

Manila Thermal was supposed to be auctioned off yesterday.

In the meantime, PSALM vice president for asset management and electricity trading Froilan Tampinco said PSALM had been preparing for the auction of the 600-MW Calaca coal-fired power plant in Batangas, to be held in the second semester.

"While this will be the third round of bidding for the Calaca plant, we know that investors remain keen on acquiring this particular asset," he said.

PSALM had twice attempted to sell the Calaca plant, but both attempts failed.

Ayala Corp. sets '07 capex at ₱46.7B

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

AYALA CORP. IS RAISING ITS budget for projects to P46.7 billion this year, from last year's P42 billion.

Of the amount, P17.5 billion would go to Globe Telecom Inc. for its broadband and wireless business expansion, said Ayala chief finance officer and senior managing director Rufino Luis Manotok.

Ayala Land Inc., he said, would get P16.2 billion for its 27 projects—residential development, and construction of shopping centers and facilities for business process outsourcing firms.

Utility firm Manila Water Co. has allotted P5.6 billion to expand its water distribution network, while Ayala's own capital spending program would require P4.8 billion.

"While our growth model in the past few years has been clearly driven by the success of our traditional businesses, we are also aware that we must continue to develop new growth platforms if we are to remain attractive as an investment," Ayala chair and chief executive officer Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala told shareholders during the company's annual stockholder's meeting yesterday.

The company also secured its shareholders' approval for the increase in its authorized capital stock to P37 billion from P26 billion. This is to give the company the flexibility to raise more capital in the future.

Last year, Ayala raised P5.8 billion from an offering of preferred B shares, the first peso hybrid issue in the country.

Ayala also said it would continue to identify new growth opportunities that leverage on its core assets, synergies and distinct capabilities.

While it earlier announced plans to venture into the power sector, Zobel also said there were no formal plans as of the moment to make investments in that arena.

RP to get . . .

From page B1

Philippines) has fallen to between $100 to $200 million a year," Adams said. "This year, we expect to be able to provide over $600 million to the (Philippine) government."

He said the World Bank had decided to resume large-scale lending to the Philippines, and revived the development policy loan (DPL).

A $250-million DPL has already been included under the bank's country assistance for the fiscal year July 2006 to 2007.

Adams said that for the first time in eight years, "the bank is doing what we call the DPL, providing (over) $200 million in direct budgetary support."

"The decision to do that reflected broad confidence in the government's economic policies," he explained. "So we hope in the next couple of years ... to sustain lending at approximately $600 million a year."

Already,' the World Bank has drawn up its country assistance package for the Philippines under a three-year framework.

Asked about the breakdown of the official development package for the current year, World Bank country director Joachim von Amsberg said this year's allotment would include a large loan of more than $200 million for national roads improvement and management program.

"This program targets to have more roads for every peso spent, reduce corruption risks, and bring civil society into the program," Von Amsberg said.

Repayments . . .

From page B1

statement.

For the fourth quarter, Tetangco said gross repayment of principal medium to long-term loans amounted to $3.1 billion, of which $1.1 billion consisted of payments ahead of maturities. On the other hand, fresh drawings amounted to only $1.9 billion, he added.

A lot of borrowers, including the BSP, took advantage of the peso's strength by settling some foreign currency-denominated debts ahead of maturity during the period.

As a percentage of gross domestic product, total foreign obligations fell to 45.6 percent at the end of 2006 against the 55 percent of the previous year.

The country's debt service burden, which includes principal and interest payments on foreign loans, was at 12 percent of total exports of goods and services in 2006, lower than 13.5 percent in the previous year.

Doris C. Dumlao, Reuters

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 30, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		FINANCIAL			
		BANKS			
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	10.75	11.25	10.5	10.5	421,000
Banco De Oro Univ. Bank	59	60	58.5	60	1,394,600
Bank Of The Phil. Islands	65	66	65	65.5	1,454,300
China Banking Corp.	860	870	860	870	2,220
Citystate Savings Bank	20	20	20	20	300
Export And Ind. Bank A	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	2,760,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	103	104	102	103	455,470
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61.5	62.5	61.5	62.5	4,970,300
Philippine National Bank	45	46	45	46	102,700
Phil. Savings Bank	62	62	62	62	10,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	28	29	27.5	29	11,476,700
Security Bank Corp.	77.5	78	77	77.5	268,900
Union Bank Of The Phil.	58	59	58	59	90,000
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS			
Atr Kimeng Fin. Corp.	3	3.1	3	3.1	50,000
Bankard Inc.	0.71	0.71	0.71	0.71	30,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	6.9	6.9	6.8	6.8	38,000
First Abacus Financial	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	130,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	655	660	650	650	1,650
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2170	2170	2160	2160	920
Ivantage Corp.	1.54	1.56	1.5	1.54	26,073,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER			
Pnoc Energy Dev. Corp.	6	6.1	6	6.1	4,020,000
First Gen Corp.	56	56	56	56	950,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	70.5	71	70	71	675,300
Manila Electric Co. A	70.5	71.5	69	69	120,600
Manila Electric Co. B	70.5	71	69	69	1,153,600
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.7	2,140,000
Petron Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.7	11,275,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.32	0.35	0.32	0.32	2,890,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.44	1.5	1.44	1.44	686,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO			
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	30,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25	25	25	540,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	54.5	54.5	53.5	54.5	112,700
RFM Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	101,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.48	2.48	2.42	2.44	222,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	20,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63.5	64.5	63.5	64.5	33,300
San Miguel Corp. B	71.5	71.5	71	71.5	161,400
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	25,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.22	2.26	2.2	2.2	1,168,000
Universal Robina Corp.	17	17.25	17	17.25	4,125,600
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES			
Southeast Asian Cement	1.74	1.78	1.74	1.78	24,806,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.5	4.75	4.5	4.75	3,125,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	15,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.8	8.9	8.8	8.9	2,045,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.9	13,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	224,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5	5	4.95	4.95	3,941,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS			
Picop Resources Inc.	0.33	0.33	0.3	0.32	17,850,000
		HOLDING FIRMS			
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.014	0.015	0.014	0.014	409,700,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.015	0.015	0.014	0.014	286,700,000
Ayala Corp.	550	570	550	560	1,171,320
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.91	0.93	0.88	0.88	1,750,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.3	8.1	8.3	2,282,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	569,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	17,700,000
APC Group Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	16,140,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	748,400,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.72	1.72	1.66	1.66	8,827,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	4,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	8,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	3.65	4.05	3.6	4	2,016,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.4	3.3	3.4	19,899,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.2	2,066,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	4.9	5	4.9	5	106,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	150,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	20,000
House Of Investments Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8	221,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.5	12.75	481,600
Keppel Holdings	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	39,000
Keppel Holdings B	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	183,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.48	0.64	0.48	0.64	190,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	9.4	10	9.4	9.4	6,878,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.44	10,475,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.3	4,910,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	100,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.38	0.39	0.34	0.36	28,110,000
SM Investments Corp.	350	355	350	355	183,320
South China Resources Inc.	1.12	1.2	1.12	1.2	151,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.48	1.52	1.48	1.52	46,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.28	0.31	0.28	0.28	17,300,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	70,000
		PROPERTY			
Ayala Land Inc.	16.25	16.5	16.25	16.5	10,738,400
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	60,000
Belle Corp.	1.42	1.44	1.42	1.42	7,160,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.42	1.44	1.38	1.38	817,000
Cityland Development Corp.	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	5,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	490,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.95	4.1	3.85	4.1	784,000
C & P Homes Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.55	2.55	1,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	359,000
Cebu Prop. Vent B	1.72	1.72	1.72	1.72	80,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.39	0.39	11,020,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.74	0.76	0.74	0.75	17,040,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.135	0.14	0.12	0.125	43,910,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.66	1.68	1.66	1.68	29,047,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	570,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	1,040,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.7	3	2.7	3	270,000
Interport Res.	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	41,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	38,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.46	0.47	0.46	0.46	1,420,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.79	0.79	1,650,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	2,000,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	2,500,000
Megaworld Corp.	3.25	3.45	3.25	3.35	77,442,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4	86,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.76	0.76	3,490,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	20	20	19	19.5	1,918,800
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	1,510,000
SM Development Corp.	3.7	3.75	3.7	3.7	159,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.5	11	11.5	14,469,400
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.68	0.72	0.68	0.69	940,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.205	0.18	0.18	19,430,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs Inc.	1.16	1.16	1.16	1.16	2,000
		MEDIA			
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	25	25	24,900
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	10,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS			
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.68	1.76	1.68	1.76	7,763,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1225	1235	1225	1230	37,880
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.8	7	6.8	7	4,664,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2510	2530	2510	2525	278,390
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.245	4,940,000
Diversified Fin. Network	3.95	4.6	3.95	4.55	301,000
Imperial Res.	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	14,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	410,000
IPVG CORP.	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.5	527,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0625	0.0625	0.06	0.0625	11,200,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.6	1.6	137,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.12	2.12	2.1	2.1	115,000
Philweb Corp.	0.045	0.046	0.044	0.045	98,400,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES			
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.25	4.25	4.25	4.25	80,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	27	27.5	26.5	27.5	2,111,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	500,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE			
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.45	3.55	3,244,000
Manila Jockey Club	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	20,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.41	0.43	0.39	0.39	6,900,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.95	0.98	0.95	0.98	4,660,000
		EDUCATION			
Far Eastern University	810	810	810	810	10,420
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	42,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES			
Macroasia Corp.	3	3.4	3	3.4	17,052,000
Paxys Inc.	27	29	27	28.5	2,076,500
		MINING			
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5	5	4.9	5	476,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5	5.1	4.95	5	850,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	144,100,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	13.75	14.25	13.5	13.5	15,128,700
Benguet Corp. A	11.25	11.25	11.25	11.25	15,500
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	199,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	1.88	1.94	1.86	1.88	104,869,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.3	21,930,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.34	7,510,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.031	0.031	0.03	0.03	575,200,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.034	0.035	0.034	0.034	107,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.019	0.019	0.018	0.019	592,500,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.45	4.55	4.45	4.55	7,239,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	24.5	27.5	24.5	27.5	962,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.77	0.83	0.77	0.8	3,340,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.28	1.3	1.24	1.26	1,691,000
		OIL			
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.48	0.48	25,220,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.014	0.016	0.014	0.015	946,400,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.015	0.017	0.015	0.016	337,200,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	292,300,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10	10.25	10	10.25	65,000

CURRENCIES

March 30, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.749906	1.000000	48.2620
Japan	Yen	0.006359	0.008480	0.4093
United Kingdom	Pound	1.471616	1.962400	94.7093
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.095981	0.127990	6.1771
Switzerland	Franc	0.616142	0.821625	39.6533
Canada	Dollar	0.647364	0.863260	41.6627
Singapore	Dollar	0.494400	0.659283	31.8183
Australia	Dollar	0.605495	0.807428	38.9681
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.989194	2.652590	128.0193
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.199986	0.266681	12.8706
Brunei	Dollar	0.492776	0.657117	31.7138
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000082	0.000110	0.0053
Thailand	Baht	0.023362	0.031153	1.5035
UAE	Dirham	0.204234	0.272346	13.1440
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.333500	64.3574
Korea	Won	0.000798	0.001064	0.0514
China	Yuan**	0.097050	0.129416	6.2459
Argentina	Peso	0.241906	0.322581	15.5684
Brazil	Real	0.365897	0.487924	23.5482
Denmark	Kroner	0.134223	0.178987	8.6383
India	Rupee	0.017259	0.023015	1.1107
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217207	0.289645	13.9788
Mexico	New Peso	0.068079	0.090783	4.3814
New Zealand	Dollar	0.535724	0.714388	34.4778
Norway	Kroner	0.123237	0.164336	7.9312
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012356	0.016477	0.7952
South Africa	Rand	0.103293	0.137741	6.6477
Sweden	Kroner	0.107235	0.142998	6.9014
Syria	Pound	0.014446	0.019264	0.9297
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022687	0.030253	1.4601
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000349	0.000466	0.0225

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—March 29, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.
** Asian time closing rate as of March 29, 2007

Chinese firm bags $262-M gov't e-network deal

By Daxim L. Lucas

A CABINET-LEVEL COMMITTEE HAS given the green light to a proposal to set up a $262-million national broadband network (NBN) for the government's telecommunications needs.

According to officials of the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), the project would be awarded to Chinese firm ZTE, which would build the network using money borrowed from the Chinese government.

The NBN scheme calls for the construction of a national communications network for landline, cellular and broadband Internet facilities for the use of various government agencies.

The goal is to make intra-government communications more efficient and less expensive.

At the same time, the DOTC officials said that the unsolicited proposal submitted by Amsterdam Holdings Inc. (AHI) for a similar project lacked the necessary requirements to be evaluated under the Build-Operate-Transfer Law.

In a letter dated March 26, 2007 to AHI president Nathaniel Sauz, DOTC assistant secretary Elmer A. Soneja said that the department "cannot take the appropriate action on [the] unsolicited proposal for the reason that the documents which [were] resubmitted... were likewise found to be incomplete, thus [falling] short of the requirements of the BOT Law."

DOTC released the details of its letter after AHI went public with its complaint that its NBN proposal—made before DOTC approached ZTE for the project—was not acted upon as required under the law.

Soneja cited provisions of the BOT Law which states that, for an unsolicited proposal to be considered, the proponent has to submit a complete proposal which shall include a feasibility study, a company profile, a list of key personnel, a list of completed works, their latest financial statements and the basic contractual terms of both parties to the deal.

AHI had earlier claimed that it submitted the first complete proposal to the DOTC for NBN on Dec. 5, 2006, claiming that DOTC had not conducted the initial evaluation more than 60 days from the submission of the proposal.

Soneja refuted this claim, saying AHI has so far failed to comply with the requirements of the BOT Law, despite requests from DOTC for the firm to submit complete documentation.

AHI's failure to disclose their financial and technological partners made it impossible for DOTC to determine their financial and technical capabilities, Soneja said.

Despite this, DOTC officials said that the proposal of ZTE was superior, partly because it will entail no financial participation from the government during the project's construction phase.

THE AXA
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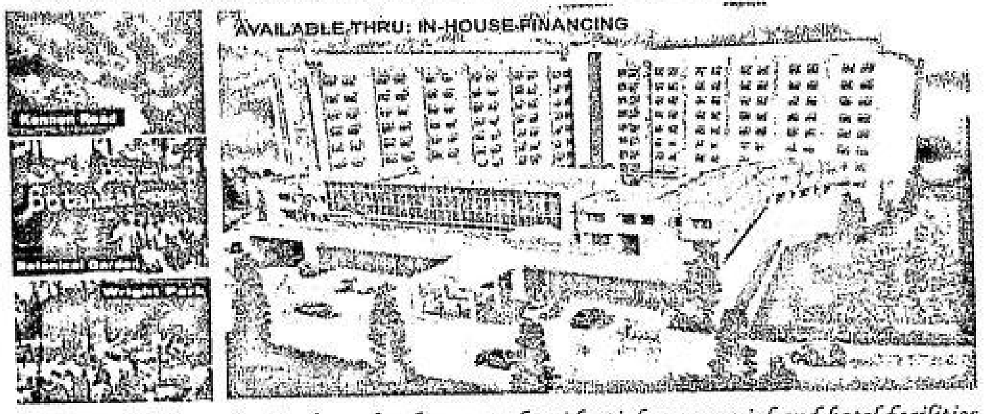

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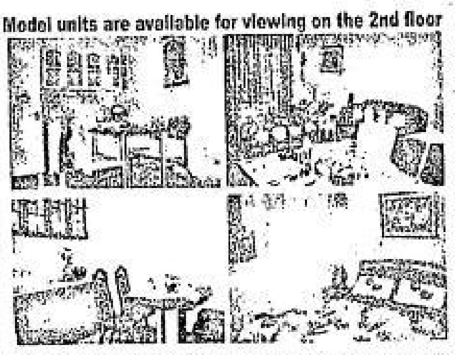

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First Holdings to issue ₱5B in debt paper

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FIRST PHILIPPINE HOLDINGS CORP. (FPHC), which oversees the Lopez group's interests in infrastructure and power generation, has hiked its peso debt offer to P5 billion from P3 billion.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, FPHC said it had signed a fixed rate corporate notes facility agreement with ING Bank NV Manila branch and certain institutions for the offering of up to P5 billion in fixed rate corporate notes.

FPHC chief information officer Ernesto Rufino Jr. said the proceeds of the notes would be used for "general corporate purposes including capital expenditures and acquisitions."

Sources separately said FPHC had decided to increase the size of the offering due to favorable market demand.

Last month, FPHC floated P3 billion in fixed rate corporate notes to local investors, said FPHC vice president Federico Lopez.

Lopez had said that the proceeds may be used to help FPHC increase its stake in the toll road business in case other shareholders sell their shares.

Manila North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), the builder and concessionaire of the North Luzon Expressway (NLEX) is controlled (67.1 percent) by First Philippine Infrastructure Development Corp. (FPIDC), which in turn, is owned by First Philippine Holdings Corp. (FPHC) and Benpres Holdings Corp. (BHC) of the Lopez Group.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Education
Region V (Bicol)
Legazpi City

DepED

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Bidding for CATERING SERVICES for the 2007 PALARONG PAMBANSA (Concentration Training on April 9-15, 2007 at Freedom Sports Complex, Pili, Camarines Sur and Actual Palaro on April 16 - May 2, 2007 at Koronadal City

1. The Department of Education ROV, through the *Regional Funds* intends to apply the sum of *Three Million Two Hundred Thirty Five Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P3,235,500.00)* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for CATERING SERVICES for the 2007 PALARONG PAMBANSA (Concentration Training on April 9-15, 2007 at Freedom Sports Complex, Pili, Camarines Sur and Actual Palaro on April 16-May 2, 2007 at Koronadal City. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The *DepED ROV* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for CATERING SERVICES for the 2007 PALARONG PAMBANSA (Concentration Training on April 9-15, 2007 at Freedom Sports Complex, Pili, Camarines Sur and Actual Palaro on April 16-May 2, 2007 at Koronadal City. Delivery of the GOODS is required by **April 9, 2007**. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **ITB**.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships. organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Bidder must have good track record in catering service for at least one (1) Palarong Bicol and Palarong Pambansa. Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **ITB**. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *Department of Education, Regional Office V* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 am 5:00 pm.*
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of *Three Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P3,500.00)*. The method of payment will be in the form of cash at the DepED RO V Cashier's Office. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **10:00 A.M., April 4, 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check in the amount of *Php 32,355.00* or Bank Guarantee in the amount of *Php 48,532.50* or Surety Bond in the amount of *Php 80,887.50*. **Late Bids shall not be acepted.**
7. Bid opening shall be on **April 4, 2007, 10:00 A.M.** at the Director's Conference Room, DepED ROV, Rawis, Legazpi City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below.
8. The *DepED ROV* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

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Philphos to export to Brazil

By Amy R. Remo

PHILIPPINE PHOSPHATE FERTILIZER CORP. is set to export P962 million worth of phosphate fertilizer to Brazil in the next two months.

Dennis Mate, executive vice president of Philphos, said in an interview that the shipment to Brazil would account for about 20 percent of the company's total exports this year.

"Penetrating the Latin market is a big step because this is the first time that we'll be exporting outside Asia, and we're the only company in the Philippines to do so," said Mate.

Due to freight cost limitations, Philphos supplies fertilizer only to the Asian market, including Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Last year, the company exported $80 million worth of fertilizers.

Philphos' current capacity is pegged at 1.1 million tons a year.

With the opening of the Brazil export market, fertilizer experts fear there would be less volume going to the domestic market, further contracting the already tight supply of fertilizers.

The export market is more lucrative as world phosphate fertilizer prices have increased by as much as 25 percent since last month.

Brazil, however, is willing to pay top dollar for its imports from the Philippines because it needed fertilizer to expand its production of bio-ethanol from sugar cane.

Brazil has been tearing down portions of the Amazon forest for conversion to sugar cane fields, resulting in increased phosphate fertilizer requirements.

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- Must have sold second home or resort development projects.

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OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved

FELIZA TERESITA "LIZ" NUESA MIRÓ

a.k.a. **TETCHIE MIRÓ ESTRELLA**
MAY 11, 1953

Miss Republic of the Philippines 1969 – 1970
Municipal Mayor of Villasis, Pangasinan 1988 – 1992

Who peacefully joined our Creator on March 26, 2007
at Makati Medical Center, Makati City, Metro Manila

She is survived by husband,
former Representative, 5th District of Pangasinan:
Hon. CONRADO "JOJO" B. ESTRELLA, JR.

CHILDREN	: **Michelle Dupaya** married to **Vice Mayor Bernardo Tumagay** **Marvine Simon Miró Estrella** & **Marlon Matthew Miró Estrella**
GRANDCHILDREN	: **Alecz** & **Miguel Tumagay**
BROTHERS	: **Mayor Antonio "Jojo" Miró, Jr.** **Ricardo Jose** & **Paul John**
SISTERS	: **Grace Dulay, Ling-Ling Sese** & **Pinky San Juan**, in-laws, nephews, nieces, uncles, aunts, cousins, grand-niece and mother, **Teresita Feliza Pimentel Nuesa Vda de Miró.**

Her family & relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her ashes is at their residence, Hacienda Estrella, Unzad Villasis, Pangasinan where a vigil is being held until the ninth day, April 03, 2007 and will be culminated with a memorial service.

"...absent
from the
body to
be present
with the
Lord."

2 Corinthians 5:8

Onward! Upward!
To Jesus, Through Mary ...

Our Dad, Our LOLO

REMIGIO BALTAZAR MARANAN

Peacefully joined our Lord, and his wife Conching,
on 30 March 2007, at the age of 77.

His loving wife ***Conching*** (†); children and children-in-law ***Tony***, ***Lynette***, ***Agnes***, ***Charito***, ***Gina*** and ***Gungga***; ***Bud***, ***Benjie*** (†), ***Ferdie*** and ***Joy***; grandchildren ***Cholo***, ***Christina***, ***Monica***, ***Michelle***, ***Nina***, ***Nica*** and ***Joseph***; request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Christ the King Church, Greenmeadows Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, 05 April 2007, at the Evergreen Memorial Garden, Pasig City, after the Memorial Mass.

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CRESENCIA "Anching" P. ESCANO

Died in the grace of our Lord on March 27, 2007
at the age of 88.

Her bereaved children Alice, Wally, Brenda and Egay, and Butch; grandchildren and great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at La Funeraria Paz – Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park), Parañaque City.

Cremation will be on Sunday, April 1, 2007 at the Manila Memorial Park Crematory after the 5:00 p.m. Mass.

OBITUARIES

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

Ancheta Sy Go

wish to convey our deepest appreciation to all of you, our relatives and friends, who spent precious time with us, sent flowers, mass cards, gave donations, or in some other way expressed your love, concern and support in celebrating **Ancheta**'s coming home to her Creator.

Habitat for Humanity®
Philippines

Bagong Bahay. Bagong Buhay.

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY PHILIPPINES GIVES ITS homepartners a new lease on life through its various programs and projects. Habitat builds more than just houses. It builds a home you can call your own, in a community founded on faith and values, with choices of sources of livelihood, for a new and better life.

Technology. Habitat builds houses that are affordable, but, at the same time, decent and durable, which should last for a lifetime. With this goal, Habitat constantly seeks innovations in house construction. Habitat keeps houses costs low through the use of appropriate technology, such as: 1. Concrete Interlocking Blocks (CIB), which resemble Lego blocks. CIB are more expensive per piece than CHB, but they use less cement, therefore a house built with them also costs less than one built with CHB. CIB is very volunteer friendly and with a natural beauty; 2. Compressed Earth Blocks (CEB), which can be used where soil conditions allow. Although CEB houses cost roughly the same as those built with CIB, they are more pleasing to the eye; 3. Steel Frames, which are light-alloy steel frames that are pre-cut by computer-guided equipment, assembled on-site and bolted on to a concrete slab. Walls are fiber-cement boards and the roof is made of Galvalume. The use of steel frames was piloted in Baseco, a project of the City of Manila; 4. and Medium-Rise Buildings (MRB), such as the project in the City of Taguig, composed of three-storey buildings, with eighteen units in each building. It is a showcase of appropriate building technologies.

Sustainability

Habitat simply empowers the homepartners to build their houses with all costs fully repaid at no profit. Homepartners repay through affordable, zero-interest, inflation-adjusted mortgage loans. These monthly mortgage payments are pooled into a "Fund for Humanity", so that the amortization of one house will help build another, in accordance with Habitat's "House-for-a-House" principle. Habitat's "Fund for Humanity" is a trusteed account where all funds raised including repayments are deposited and kept until more houses are to be built.

Home partners are encouraged to put an initial equity in addition to investing hundreds of hours of their own labor - "sweat equity" -- into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

Ownership

Habitat not only gives families a place to live in, but a place they can call their own. All houses constructed by Habitat are properly turned over to the homepartners with all the necessary documentation that will enable them to proudly say that they have a home of their own.

International Volunteers

Habitat is an international organization, with affiliates from all over the globe. Habitat Philippines gets volunteers from other countries under its "Global Village" program from as far away as Europe and the United States, and various Asian countries such as Korea and Japan.

Community, livelihood and spiritual development

Habitat aims to build decent houses in decent communities where people could grow into all that God intended. Habitat also ensures the proper development of Habitat communities, especially in values formation; livelihood; education; health, sanitation, and the environment; promoting a culture of savings.

Habitat partners with other organizations in building these communities. One such alliance is with the Center for Community Transformation, also a Christian ministry. Its holistic approach has a strong microfinance component that is directed to providing their members access to self-help livelihood projects with an excellent record of repayments. CCT's partnership with Habitat also fills the gap in the needs of their own community partners, i.e. decent housing via largely renovations of their existing substandard dwellings. The CCT, in turn, conducts community-organizing work in Baseco and in other Habitat communities.

This partnership may well become the model of partnerships with non-affiliates in promoting the housing ministry as they allow us to focus on our core competency of building homes while a CCT-type non-affiliate provides the soft programs.

Join the Circle of Friends of Habitat

"Habitat has successfully removed the stigma of charity by substituting it with a sense of partnership." - Former US President Jimmy Carter

The Friends of Habitat is a program that encourages individuals from all sectors of society - professionals, entrepreneurs and philanthropic sectors, corporate, religious, youth, academic, civic, trade organizations, government, MFIs, NGOs, among others - to join their circle and become dynamically involved. The program invites you to be a friend - a partner - of Habitat.

It is a movement within the Habitat for Humanity Philippines, spearheaded by former trustees and foundation members with the focused goal of enlarging the circle of "Friends of Habitat." They are looking for vibrant individuals who can actively advocate, contribute time, money and various other resources needed for the sustainability of Habitat.

As a Friend of Habitat, there are different ways to become involved - through volunteer opportunities. As a volunteer, you can join a build. Nothing compares to the experience of actually going to a build site, working alongside other volunteers and the future homeowner. You become a first-hand witness to lives being changed by the power of Habitat's mission. Another type of involvement is through the contribution of financial and/or material resources, as a regular donor.

Habitat takes urban housing to the next level

Apart from being Habitat home recipients in Baseco, Tondo, Manila, Crisanta "Anteng" Diocton, Josefina "Josie" Espartero, Roger Balicoco, Joel and Hermelinda "Marie" Padernal, and Felicisima "Aling Nene" Carcellar are fortunate in another sense: they knew Baseco when it was still filled with mangroves and teeming with fish, shrimps and crabs.

"Until the early 80s when I first set foot in Baseco, this was all water and mangroves. Ships would dock here and we would barter, say, a pack of cigarettes for fish or shrimps," Roger, president of Habitat Homeowners Association in Baseco, recalls. Others, like the families of Anteng and Nene caught crabs for a living. "Ang lugar na ito'y kuhaan ng alimango, isda at hipon. Talagang magsasawa ka," Anteng said.

There were very few families in Baseco then but by the late 80s, people - mostly coming from the provinces with no permanent homes in Manila - started to build shanties in Baseco and before long, the place became an eyesore - full of squatters, mud, dirt and garbage.

"Talaga pong napakahirap tumira dito. Lahat mahal mula tubig hanggang kuryente pero nagtiis kami dahil wala namang ibang matirahan. Sa maliit na kinikita, pinagkakasya naming. Saka, di kami nawalan ng pag-asa," Josefina "Josie" Espartero, remembering her family's early struggles, said. Even after the massive Baseco fire in 2004 which completely gutted their former house, Josie's family never lost hope.

Their strong faith and perseverance paid off. Not only were they able to get a new house, by way of Habitat Philippines and the city government of Manila, they now have a "hulog boundary" tricycle business, wherein tricycle drivers pay off the tricycles they got from Josie on a daily boundary basis for two to three years.

Roger Balicoco has stayed in Baseco since the early 80s. "I was a Magnolia salesman and a friend convinced me to buy a house here. I was then still renting a place in Sta. Cruz, where I was a member of the barangay council, and every weekend, I would be in Baseco tending my pigs. I think I was the first to raise pigs here for a living. My business was doing well - water was aplenty to clean the pig stalls and the ships that plied this route provided me with wheat and soya which I boiled to feed the pigs. But I had to stop when more and more people settled in Baseco."

When fire gutted Baseco in 2004, Roger's house was spared but he volunteered to demolish it himself when demolition time came. "I wanted to serve as model to my neighbors," he said. Apparently, his neighbors like him because last year, they elected him president of their homeowners association over five other contenders.

When asked what Habitat does in case one fails to meet the monthly housing dues, he said: "May puso naman ang Habitat, naiintindihan kung nagigipit sa pagbabayad ng hulog sa bahay. As homeowners, we have our rights as well as obligations. Yung ayaw talagang magbayad, yan ang mali nila. Siguro, nasa tao lang talaga kung gustong magbayad o hindi."

Husband and wife Joel and Hermelinda "Marie" Padernal plan to settle everything once Joel gets another job. He was a "bodeguero" for 18 years but the company he was working with closed shop. Marie who used to run a small canteen in the same firm also found herself jobless. Although childless, both support their respective parents and young siblings. "Obligasyon talaga namin ang magbayad. Gipit lang kami sa ngayon," Marie said.

Both Felicisima "Aling Nene" Carcellar, 64, and Erlinda "Linda" Tizon, 38, are also in the same tight fix. Aling Nene's son, Renato, the breadwinner in the family, earns a living by catching "tahong." Aling Nene's role is to pack the catch into small plastic bags and sells them at P10 per bag. On bad days, she can only sell five bags or a net earning of fifty pesos. On good days, she earns over one hundred pesos.

Linda who lives across Aling Nene relies on her husband, a street vendor who sells packed onions and tomatoes, for their livelihood. "He buys the cheap onions and tomatoes in Divisoria, then repacks them in smaller quantities. But his earnings is not enough to sustain us," she said. They have three children, the youngest of whom is only over a year old.

Despite the hardships, however, Linda manages to give coffee or bread to Aling Nene every day. "Para ko na rin siya kasing Nanay," Linda said. "Mabait siya sa akin," Aling Nene quips in return.

While Baseco may not be as idyllic as it was 20 years ago, it is no doubt far better off now than when houses were supported by long wooden poles with mud and garbage as your daily scenario. The roads are now paved although water and electricity connections remain problematic to many.

Habitat Philippines aims to make Baseco a model community - no easy task for sure but with volunteerism or "bayanihan" at its core and people like Aling Nene, Linda, Roger, Josie and the rest, who despite the odds are trying to make life worth living, this may no longer be a farfetched dream. (Corazon A. Ong)

ING Village at Baseco

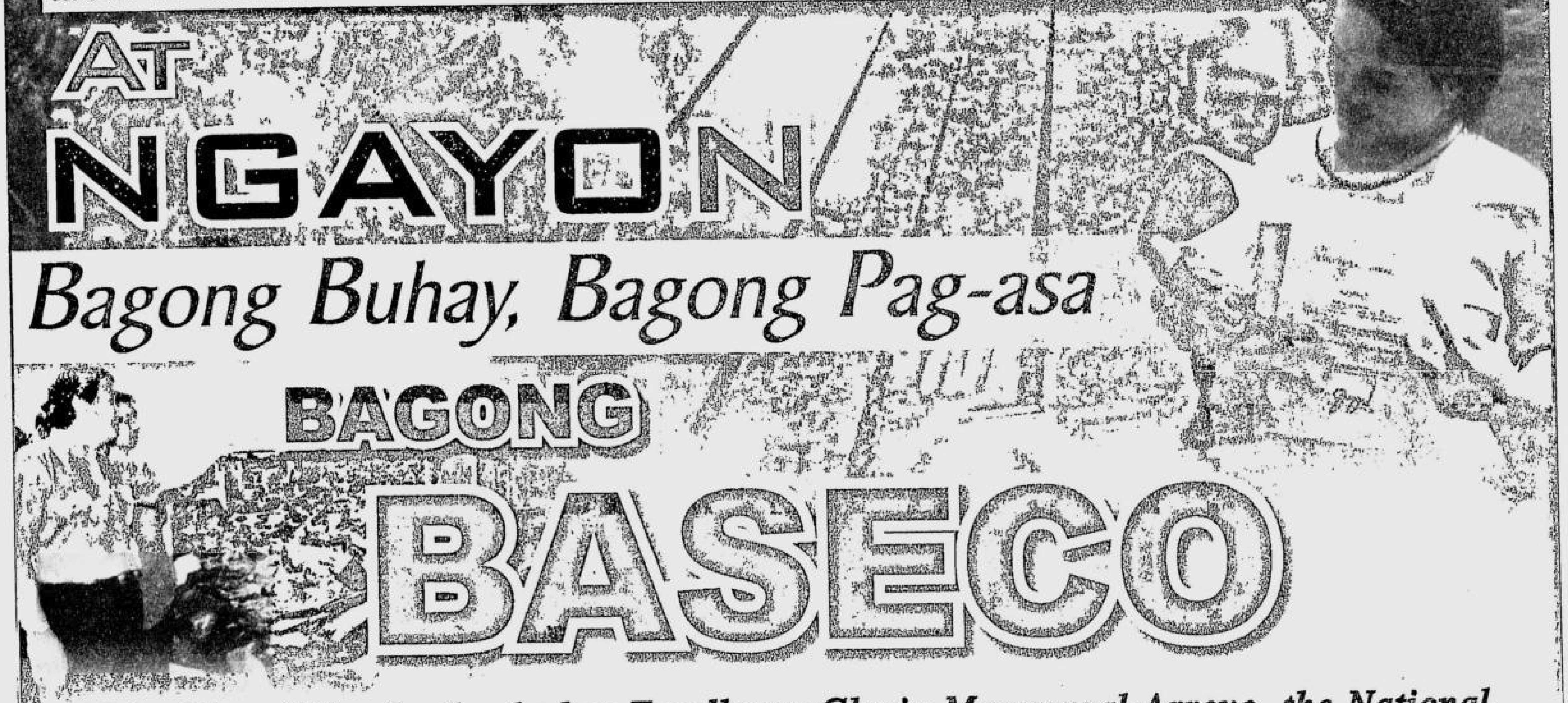
ING VILLAGE

ING VILLAGE

- With over 150 houses and homepartner families, we affirm our commitment to Habitat and our global "Chances for Children" program;
- Within our communities, we aim to enhance our Filipino youth's well-being through education;
- With the support of our employees and partners, and through God's grace – we are confident that we will succeed.

NOON

TUBIG AT PUTIK



AT NGAYON

Bagong Buhay, Bagong Pag-asa

BAGONG BASECO

The City of Manila thanks her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, the National Government, Habitat for Humanity and Gawad Kalinga for their continued support of the City's project of low-cost housing in Baseco... successfully converting tragedy into an opportunity for poor families to be homeowners.

Tuloy-tuloy ang programang
BUHAYIN ANG MAYNILA !

Mayor LITO ATIENZA
City of Manila

ALI ATIENZA
Chairman, Inner City Dev't Committee

SCIENCE/HEALTH

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ELEPHANTIASIS IN R.P.

The tiny bite that causes 'massive' problems

By Tessa R. Salazar

SHE'S THE CULPRIT, AGAIN. The female mosquito has always been the bane of humankind. She has been the cause not only of malaria and dengue (only female mosquitoes suck blood while the males drink plant nectar), but now she is also tagged the harbinger of a heinous disease: elephantiasis.

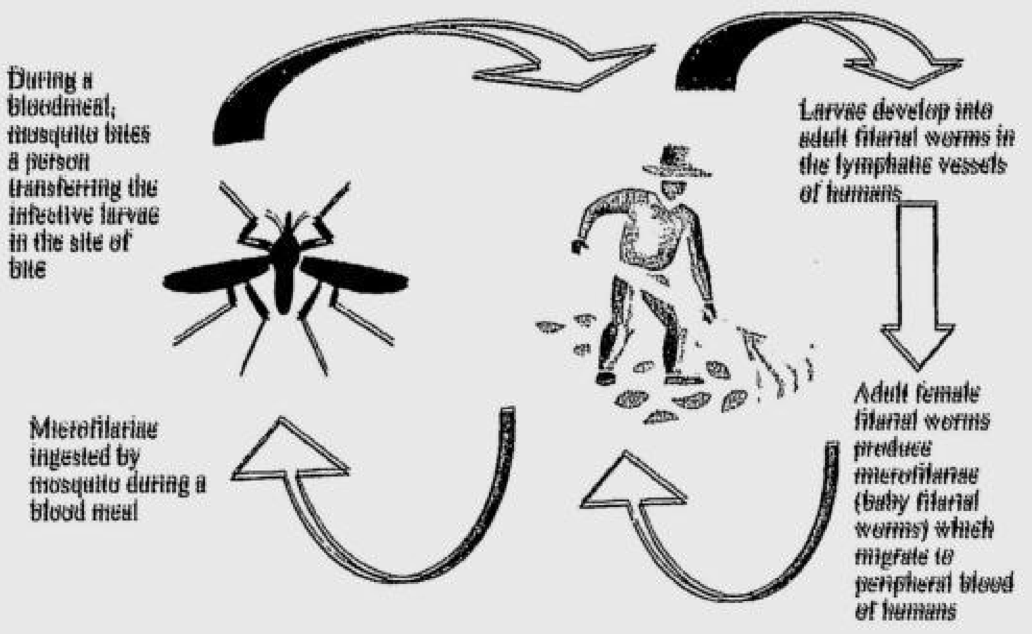
As its name suggests, elephantiasis manifests through massive swelling of the arms, legs, breasts and genitalia (the scrotum and penis for the males, vulva for the females). Other symptoms may also be renal damage (manifested by meaturia, or blood in the urine) or proteinuria (excess serum protein in the urine).

Elephantiasis (also known as Lymphatic Filariasis) is extremely painful for the victim, not only physically but psychologically as well, as disfigurement is one of its lasting results.

Carrier, noncarrrier

Parasitic worms (*Wuchlerieria bancrofti* and *Brugia malayi*) are the actual causes of elephantiasis, and these worms usually hitch a ride in *Aedes poecilius*, *Anopheles flavirostris*, *Mansonia bonnea*, *Mansonia uniformis* and *Culex quinquefasciatus* types of mosquitoes. A carrier mosquito that bites a human victim infects the individual with the worm as well.

At the other end of the infection transmission cycle, noncarrier mosquitoes which bite filarial-infected humans become carriers of the parasite, as microfilariae are sucked in by the mosquito. Inside the mosquito, the microfilariae develop into the infective stage in 7 to 21 days, and migrate to the mouth part of the mosquito, where it waits until the mosquito punctures into the bloodstream of its next human victim.


During a bloodmeal, mosquito bites a person transferring the infective larvae in the site of bite
Larvae develop into adult filarial worms in the lymphatic vessels of humans
Adult female filarial worms produce microfilariae (baby filarial worms) which migrate to peripheral blood of humans
Microfilariae ingested by mosquito during a blood meal

LIFE cycle of Lymphatic filariasis

Experts observe that the newly introduced larvae then lodge into the lymph vessels and lymph glands of the victim, and develop into adult male and female worms. There, they reproduce into millions of mirofilariae, which then circulate in the bloodstream, ready to wreak havoc on the victim's body and ready to find another mosquito host to perpetuate the infectious cycle.

Based on a study by the University of the Philippines National Institutes of Health, there are an estimated 645,232 cases of elephantiasis in the Philippines, causing about $4.4 million in annual losses due to lost work days and decreased productivity.

Up to 23 million Filipinos are at risk of getting infected.

Endemic mapping

In the annual report of the National Filariasis Elimination Program (CY 2003 to 2005) of the Department of Health's National Center for Disease Prevention and Control and the National Center for Health Promotion, Filariasis was discovered to be endemic in the country some 90 years ago by foreign workers.

The annual report also stated that in the endemic mapping ending in 2004, there were 39 established endemic provinces wherein 19 percent of cases were from the Visayas group of provinces, 25 percent from Luzon and 56 percent from Mindanao.

Statistics also showed that 76 percent of the endemic areas in the Philippines belong to fourth to sixth class types of municipalities.

The National Elimination Program of the DOH has been able to conduct preventive treatments on 30 million people in 33 endemic provinces from 2003 to 2005.

Relieve suffering

Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III said those treated were given two drug combinations of albendazole and diethylarbamazine citrate that killed filarial worms. The department also administered added nutritional benefits especially for mothers and children through addressing other forms of parasitism.

The second objective of the program has been to relieve the suffering of those already infected. Steps done included proper local hygiene; surgery of hydrocoeles (fluid-filled swelling of the scrotum); treatment of acute manifestations; early recognition and prompt treatment of infected individuals.

Health workers were also trained and health education materials for patients in local languages were handed out.

An Immunochromatographic test, or an antigen test to rapidly determine the early stages of elephantiasis, costs P156. The drug to treat the disease costs P5 per person per year.

'Eradicable'

Dr. Jean Marc Olive, WHO representative, said Lymphatic Filariasis is present in 21 countries of the Western Pacific Region, which includes the Philippines.

"For hundreds of years, filiariasis has had a major impact, causing untold suffering to those affected, (preventing them from going) to work, getting married and leading normal lives," he said.

On the brighter side, however, Olive added that filiariasis is one of six infectious diseases considered "eradicable" from the Philippines by 2010.

Free of restraint

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

WINDOW SHOPPING through a mall, you see something in the display case—a bag, a shirt, maybe even the stuffed pig on the shelf—and simply have to have it right at that moment. You may not have enough cash on you, but there's an ATM nearby, or the brand-new credit card in your wallet just waiting to be used. This sudden urge to spend is better known as impulse buying, and some studies define it as the event that takes place when desire overcomes the shopper's original plan to merely look instead of claim.

But what exactly makes the mind shift from "that looks good" to "must have that now"? Previous studies have suggested that impulse buying is a part of shopping therapy, buying to bolster one's mood. In the March issue of the Journal of Consumer Research, however, two University of Minnesota researchers suggest that impulse buying is how the mind reacts to the notion of self-denial. As psychologist and marketing professor Kathleen Vohs and advertising and mass communication professor Ronald Faber found, when other limits are imposed, people react by going on impulse spending sprees.

How people think

The most striking of their experiments for this paper involves several dozen college student volunteers who were asked to write down everything they could think of for 6 minutes, supposedly as part of a study on understanding how people think. While the control group had those instructions, the test group had an additional caveat; if they thought of white bears, they should simply put a check mark on the side of the page instead of writing down anything involving that topic. (The researchers don't say just how many participants suddenly found their minds filled with white bears after that instruction.)

After the writing exercise, both groups of students were then given funds to spend at the campus store, supposedly as part of a second, marketing study. Vohs and Faber found that those who weren't allowed to think about the bears spent significantly more—and bought more items—than those who had no such restriction imposed upon them.

Against restrictions

"As self-control in one domain is exercised, a person becomes more susceptible to failing to control impulses in another," Vohs and Faber note in their paper, while reminding the reader that their study focuses solely on the relationship between self-denial and impulse buying. In a way then, the study's participants who bought more were "rebelling" against the restrictions imposed by the researchers.

But what if the restrictions weren't laid by an outside force? What if the only thing curbing the impulse to buy was a person's own self-control? New research from the University of Kentucky suggests there is a way to track this. In the March issue of the journal Psychological Science, psychologists Suzanne Segerstrom and Lise Solberg Nes suggest that people who resist the urge to give in to that inner voice that says "Buy now!" can tell when they're doing so by measuring a cardiac function called heart rate variability (HRV).

Should not go shopping

According to Segerstrom et al., in one experiment, when the study volunteers were offered a tray filled with snacks such as candies, cookies and carrots, those who studiously ignored the sweets in favor of the carrots (despite actually preferring them) had much higher HRVs than they did when they finally gave up the pretense and ate the sweets.

In the University of Minnesota press release, Vohs and Faber suggest that, based on their findings, people starting on diets or practicing other forms of self-control should probably not go shopping on those days to avoid giving in to impulse buying (though the store owners would probably love them for doing just that). If such a person were to walk into a mall wearing an HRV from Segerstrom et al.'s study though, it might be interesting to track just how this consumer would "rebel" against the (self-)imposed limit.

* * *

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

Cocoa and the heart

By Rafael R. Castillo, MD

MEDICAL FILES

WE'VE DISCUSSED PREVIOUSLY THE CARdiovascular effects of coffee and cola drinks. How about cocoa or dark chocolate?

Available scientific data indicate that it might improve arterial or blood vessel function and may even reduce cardiovascular risk.

Dr. Valentine Yanchou Nike of the Yale Prevention Center in Connecticut, presented in the recently concluded scientific sessions of the American College of Cardiology in New Orleans that dark chocolate ingestion over a short period of time was shown to significantly improve endothelial or arterial function leading their team to believe that greater benefit may be seen through a long-term evaluation.

Maintaining one's health

Cocoa is rich in flavonoids, a potent group of antioxidants commonly found in fruits and vegetables. Although they are not generally labeled as essential nutrients, many scientists believe flavonoids play an important role in maintaining one's health. Previous studies have shown that there is a strong inverse correlation between the consumption of foods rich in flavonoids and cardiovascular disease. That means, the more the ingestion of these foods, the less the risk of developing a problem of the heart and blood vessels. Cocoa or dark chocolate products are considered one of the most concentrated sources of flavonoids.

Endothelial function is an important parameter to assess the integrity of the blood vessels supplying the heart and practically all organs of the body. Derangement of endothelial function is now established as the trigger for the atherosclerotic process which occludes all arteries causing heart attacks, strokes and other vital organ dysfunction.

Help lower blood pressure

It appears that the scientific evidence on the favorable effects of cocoa is now mounting. A previously published Dutch study showed that eating or drinking cocoa products such as dark chocolate may help lower blood pressure and reduce the risk of death from any causes including heart disease in older men.

The study was published last year in the Archives of Internal Medicine and found that older men who ingested the highest amount of cocoa were half as likely to die of cardiovascular disease as those who took less or no cocoa. On top of that, their blood pressure was better controlled.

The researchers also attributed the benefits to flavonoids, specifically flavan-3-ols, which have been linked to lower blood pressure and a protective effect on the endothelial cells lining the blood vessels making them less prone to atherosclerosis.

Cocoa, cardiovascular health

In the Dutch study, Dr. Brian Buijsse, of the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, in Bilthoven, and colleagues examined associations between cocoa and cardiovascular health in 470 men aged 65 to 84 years over a 15-year period.

Of the 314 deaths reported, 152 deaths were from heart disease. Those who ingested highest amounts of cocoa were 50 percent less likely to die from heart disease, compared to those who had less or no cocoa at all. Men who had the most cocoa also showed less deaths from any other cause.

All other factors such as weight, smoking, physical activity, calorie intake and drinking alcohol were also considered in the evaluation and were discounted as the cause for the benefits seen in the "cocoa group."

Potent antioxidants

Buijsse and colleagues believe that the lowered death risk is not only a result of lowered blood pressure but is probably due to the potent antioxidants found in cocoa. Antioxidants are believed to protect against other diseases associated with oxidative stress including cancers and cardiovascular diseases.

Increase in the blood level of antioxidants such as flavonoids was associated with improved artery smoothness and reduced platelet activity, reducing its tendency to clot and occlude the arteries.

These two recent studies validate previous other studies on cocoa's benefits. Mauro Serafini, PhD, of Italy's National Institute for Food and Nutrition Research in Rome, and colleagues reported four years ago that cocoa raises levels of antioxidants in the blood. Dr. Roberto Corti of the University Hospital cardiovascular center in Zurich, also found two ounces (40 grams) of dark chocolate content per day may help prevent arteries from narrowing and hardening.

It seems that hot cocoa should make a good drink to start the day, and an ounce or two of a dark chocolate bar should go well with the evening dessert.

MMR vaccine and autism

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

THE TWO-PART SERIES ON VACACCINATIONS (March 3 and 10, 2007) generated much reader response, most of it positive. I am glad that people now prefer to prevent disease (such as through vaccinations) rather than merely attempt to cure the illness once contracted.

However, a concerned father, Edward Dalusong [evd3@yahoo.com] e-mailed the following:

The article seemed to briefly discard the link between autism and the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. I would like to direct you to the following link so that you may show your readers the other side of the controversy: www.autismwebsite.com/ari/vaccine/vaccine.htm.

As a parent of a child with autism, I know that MMR somehow played a role in his condition. Genetics plays the major role, but it is something within that MMR vaccine that triggers the gene that leads to autism. I am not a scientist or a doctor but all the evidence points to this cause. Too many parents have spoken about this and I doubt if the supposed relationship between autism and the MMR vaccine is purely anecdotal.

Scientific evidence

I asked the Immunizers team of medical doctors, who were featured in the past articles, and who specialize in vaccines, to respond to Mr. Dalusong's concerns. Here is what they have to say:

Your concern over the relation between MMR and autism is something that we have encountered here a number of times, and we're glad that you have brought it up in your inquiry. Parents have discussed these with us and we'd like to shed a little light into the topic through these collected studies. It is important that we must not merely label the link as anecdotal, but we must be prudent, as well, in coming up with a hasty conclusion from a few articles.

The article that you are referring to was done in the mid-1990s, known as the Wakefield Papers that brought up concerns about vaccine safety, particularly with MMR. This article gained attention following the publication of a small-scale study claiming a possible association between the MMR vaccine and autism.

The international scientific community did the smart thing. Scientists did not dismiss the study right away, but instead, several independent groups of experts from all over the world investigated the subject matter.

Safe vaccine

One such group is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) with the Institute of Medicine (IOM) which developed the Immunization Safety Review project. An Immunization Safety review committee was formed, composed of a panel of experts in various medical fields with no financial ties to vaccine manufacturers, previous service on vaccine advisory committees, prior expert testimony, or publications on issues of vaccine safety.

The committee concluded that no evidence exists of a causal association between MMR vaccine and autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). This conclusion is based on the following evidence:

- A consistent body of epidemiological evidence shows no association at a population level between MMR vaccine and ASD.
- The original case series of children with ASD and bowel symptoms and other available case reports are uninformative with respect to causality.
- Biologic models linking MMR vaccine and ASD are fragmentary.
- There is no relevant animal model linking MMR vaccine and ASD.

Several other published trials have also come to the same conclusion that there is no association between the MMR vaccine and autism. As for the Wakefield papers, the other authors issued retractions after more studies were made.

To vaccinate or not

Measles, mumps and rubella cause illness and death in thousands of people all around the world. Measles outbreaks have recently occurred in the UK and Germany following an increase in the number of parents who chose not to have their children vaccinated with the MMR vaccine.

We understand the concern of parents regarding vaccine safety, and we would like to emphasize the fact that no association has been found by several published trials between administration of MMR vaccine and autism cases. The World Health Organization has also publicly stood behind the safety of the MMR vaccine.

For more information about vaccines, please contact Dr. Jan Denton Chua [dents@thehealthcube.com] or Dr. Anne Lagman [anne.lagman@immunizers.com.ph].

Immunizers Clinic is located at 226 Wilson Building, Wilson St., Greenhills West, San Juan, Metro Manila, with telefax 744-5552 to 53, cell (0906) 579-6300, e-mail info@immunizers.net, and website www.immunizers.com.ph. Clinic hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Monday to Friday and from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Queena N. Lee-Chua is professor of mathematics and psychology at Ateneo de Manila University. Contact her at blessbook@yahoo.com.

Trendspotting in Valencia

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer Asuncion

THE SPANISH CITY OF VALENCIA, MORE famous for its small and sweet Valencia Oranges, hosted anew its annual furniture, lighting and accessories fair. Being the center of the furniture industry of Spain, a few hundred exhibitors came to the Feria Valencia trade center to showcase their ware.

Last year's Valencia furnishings fair was launched in the context of its new brand, "Habitat Valencia Forward." The exhibit consolidated showcases for furniture, . lighting and décor. It hosted visitors and exhibitors from Spain and neighboring European countries.

Styles

The styles introduced and exhibited during the fair was consistent with international design trends, and these are what we saw:

- **The proliferation of fiberglass and lacquered pieces, clean-lined and well-polished.** They could very well be mistaken for glass; in all forms, from sinuous organic ones to rigid cubist styles. These shiny clean surfaces came in high-contrast white, red and black, chartreuse green and citrus yellows, oranges, used as accents and paired with whites. Electric shades of fuschia, turquoise and chrome yellows were introduced this year. The lacquer work extended into cabinetry and other built-in furniture.
- **The presence of last year's wood-finish favorites**—wengue, limed oak, walnut and darker, more dramatic timber like bubinga (rosewood), ebony (like our local kamagong) and zebrano. Also highlighted were other wood veneers in their crown-cut where the grains showed themselves in their natural undulating pattern rather than in straight "cross cut" parallel lines.
- **The much-used and undying duo of timber paired with chrome and stainless steel proliferated** but this time in polished finishes.
- **Fabrics with very bold colors and exaggerated patterns and textures:** heavily corrugated chenilles, thick glossy velvets, embossed silks and heavy basketweaves. Sturdy microfiber suedes, linens and cottons were around too as the old reliables.
- **Leather, often with either ostrich or crocodile leather textures** that emphasized the current interest in the boldness of pattern and texture.
- **Large-scale baroque ornamental patterns, haptical and optical patterns and bold graphic patterns in different materials** like stenciled paint, silver leaf, mosaic tiles, fabric and vinyl.
- **Baroque is definitely back.** For lighting, Baccarat's black crystal chandelier is still last year's favorite. In addition, Swarovski's designer line fixtures were unveiled. Last year's bronze, grey and semireflective glass came to fore, in chandeliers, lamp shade fabrics and metal colors.
- **Modernist clear glass and smoked glass pieces with more options.** Acrylic and paper were exploited in every which way possible: folded, pleated, stenciled, layered. In baroque, graphic or illusional patterns.
- **Whites, greys and crèmes remained color favorites.** The restful feel of the minimalist era is far from over. Bright and hot, white is still a favorite backdrop for shades and shadows of more whites and variations of the neutral palette: blue greys, linen beige, bone, sage greens, creams, taupes. Brown of course, remains to be this decade's favorite, and this era's new black.

Walking once again on foreign soil, glancing through the exhibits was reassuring: we are truly not behind in style. Being in a third world country does not provide the assortment and the quality level we always desire, but in the end, our resourcefulness and sense of style ensure that we are never left behind.

Building ecology and indoor air quality

GREEN ARCHITRENDS

Amado de Jesus

EVERY DAY AN AVERAGE PERSON breathes about 20 cubic meters, or 20 kilograms of air which is more than the 2 to 3 kg of food and water that he takes each day. Clearly this shows that the majority of a person's intake comes from the air he breathes mostly indoors. If it is polluted, his lungs will absorb these harmful elements, passing them onto the blood and carrying them throughout the body where they may damage the organs.

When we are offered a glass of dirty water to drink, we can refuse it. In the case of polluted air, we cannot refuse to breathe it because it is polluted. In fact, it is even difficult to judge whether the air we breathe is polluted or not.

The quality of the air we breathe indoors is a major concern of a field of science that investigates the indoor living environment for various irritants.

Building Ecology is aware of the need for clean air in homes and workplaces and has been studying the effects of the "Sick House Syndrome" or "Sick Building Syndrome" on humans.

The Sick House/Building Syndrome occurs when people are exposed to chemicals found in building materials like formaldehyde and VOC (volatile organic compounds). This exposure, especially in new and renovated homes and buildings, may cause several symptoms.

Air pollutants

Air pollutants can be caused by people's day to day activities, like smoking. They may also come from materials used in construction, appliances and consumer products.

Other causes of indoor air pollution are house dust, asbestos, pollen, mold, bacteria and viruses. These pollutants are identifiable and are therefore easier to deal with. However, chemical pollutants are probably deadlier since they are more difficult to detect and therefore harder to manage.

Formaldehyde

One chemical pollutant that is easily found in our midst is formaldehyde. Formaldehyde is a colorless gas with an overpowering smell. It has been used beneficially in hundreds of products such as plastics, clothing, resins, glues, vaccines and even for tissue and organ preservation.

It is an ingredient in many construction materials especially plywood and spray-on foams. Since these resins gradually have emissions over time, formaldehyde is one of the most common indoor air pollutants, especially in hot humid climates like the Philippines.

Formaldehyde is very powerful. When one inhales the fumes, the breathing passages are blocked. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer in the United States, formaldehyde is classified as a human carcinogen. It is a known fact that it can worsen respiratory health.

The nose, eyes and lungs can easily be irritated if more than 0.1 parts per million of formaldehyde is found in the air.

Health hazards

In New Orleans, in the wake of the recent disaster brought about by Hurricane Katrina, many survivors have been living in temporary shelters such as trailers and mobile homes. These shelters with interior finishing made up mostly of composite wood, particle board and other materials that emit formaldehyde have made many people very sick.

Children, the elderly and the sick are the most environmentally sensitive people. Many of them have developed prolonged respiratory illnesses, sinus infections, lingering coughs and viral infections. Others have complained of nose bleeding, headaches and flu-like symptoms.

In this country, many are not even aware of the existence of this common indoor pollutant. With the unprecedented construction boom we see more and more development projects that produce homes and buildings that are potential health hazards.

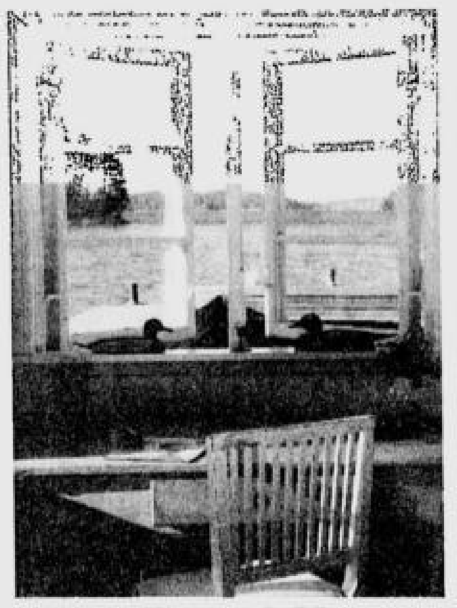
Preventive measures

To ensure good indoor air quality, environment-friendly building materials must be used to reduce or remove emissions from harmful elements. In many cases, new synthetic materials are preferred over natural materials because they are easily available, and they do not distort or shrink. However, what many people do not realize is that large quantities of chemicals are used to produce these products to give them desirable and marketable attributes. In fact, many of us have come to accept the smell of these new materials as the smell of a new house.

When transferring into a new house or condominium, open the windows to allow the indoor air to flush out and be replaced with fresh air through cross ventilation. Better still, wait 2 to 3 weeks before moving in to give more time for outgassing of harmful elements from interior finishing.

Another effective preventive measure is to remove the source of contamination. This may include everyday items such as furniture, insect sprays, tobacco and other sources of contamination.

Some common building materials that do not emit formaldehyde are ceramic components, concrete, natural stones and mortar, plain untreated wood and cement board panels.



A HEALTHY house or building on a suitable site has operable windows that allow cross ventilation and a high fresh air exchange rate to achieve good indoor air quality.

PHOTO SOURCE: CONRAN OCTOPUS, THE HEALTHY HOME

Green buildings

The new generation of green buildings has air filtration, carbon dioxide monitoring, and sophisticated maintenance systems. They have their air handling ducts regularly sanitized by competent cleaners.

Since the average person stays indoors 80 percent of the time, the indoor air quality, called IAQ is a primary concern in green buildings.

For comments or inquiries, e-mail amadodejesus@gmail.com.

Living elegantly at Eastwood LeGrand

THE SUNBURST SPIRE OF THE Chrysler Building, the silhouette of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge, and the geometric patterns of the Empire State Building lobby are all architectural icons.

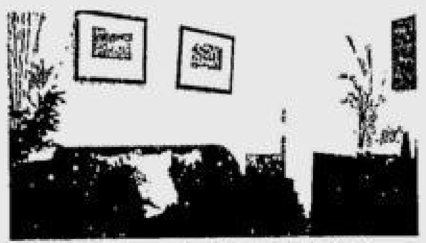
These are just some of the iconic representations of Art Deco, a popular design movement that swept through the world in the first half of the 1900s because of its eclectic, functional style. Unfortunately, Asia has few, famous Art Deco landmarks. But this scarcity will be repaired soon with the rise in Manila of a 38-story structure whose façade will become indelible to those who behold it.

Great proportions

Eastwood LeGrand, by its very name, will make a statement as grand as its predecessors, the Chrysler and Empire State Buildings. The geometric lines of steel grills will weave through the lower floors. Decorative moldings will embrace the building's very top, while stonework will grace the ground-level columns. Furnishings, done in the cheerful curves, angles, and tints of Art Deco, will welcome every resident and visitor at the grand lobby. Finally, a happy yellow hue will bathe the building and fit it into the other merry colors that keep Eastwood City vibrant.

Eastwood LeGrand will tower at the heart of the new Palm District. Arching branches will line Palm Tree Avenue, evoking another Art Deco landmark, the Miami Beach architectural district. The Palm District will have an entrance and exit conveniently leading to C-5 Road and likewise connecting to Eastwood's retail block.

While every home at Eastwood LeGrand is designed with the urbanite in mind, newlyweds and young families will relish in particular its two-bedroom residences. Think minimalism splashed with the warm tinges and flora of the tropics. Imagine a monochromatic palette that is pleasant, relaxing and very adaptable to one's own interior design fantasies.



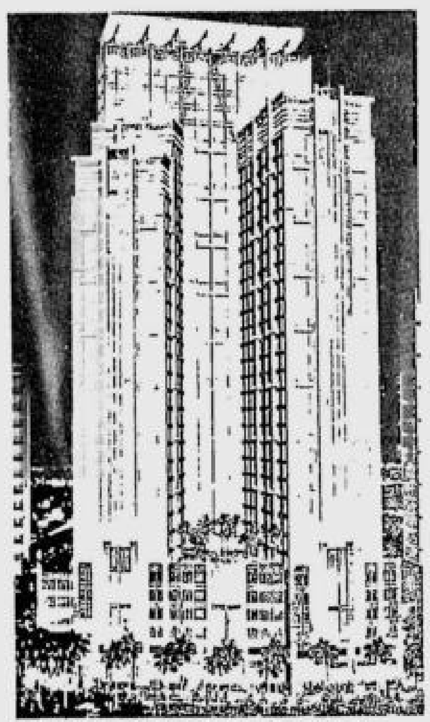
THE DEN is perfect for some "me alone" time

Add a spacious living area where young couples can cozy up or entertain guests for set dinners. In your mind's eye, stroll to wide windows from where to view a whirl of bars and cafés, or the strong beauty of chrome-and-glass office buildings.

Just off the living area is a den appropriate for some "me alone" time. Across from the den is a modern kitchen with modular cabinets and stainless steel appointments—a treasure for any wife learning the pleasures of whipping up dishes. Down the hall from the kitchen are two bedrooms, each with modular closets and picture windows from where any parent and child can leisurely point to the horizons of the metro. Of course, the master's bedroom features its own washroom.

Activities

But then, when the leisurely pace is over, why stay stuck in one's condo unit? At Eastwood LeGrand's Podium level, there are activities to occupy man, woman and child. The whole family can frolic in the pool then laze on the sun deck. Or Dad can complete routine exercises at the fitness station while the kids exhaust their energies at the play area and tot lot.



EASTWOOD LeGrand's Art Deco-inspired façade glistens at night.

Only a few steps outside LeGrand is a whole bevy of other activities, amenities, and attractions. Eastwood offers an incomparable range of restaurants and al fresco cafés, plush theaters that screen the best and most popular movies at City Walk 1 & 2, and the hippest clothes and gadgets in the Cyber and Fashion Mall. More treats await at the much anticipated Eastwood City Mall.

Eastwood LeGrand's prime location also puts top schools such as Ateneo, UP and Miriam within easy reach of parents and their kids.

Prestige, practicality, playfulness.... all of these are within easy reach of the future residents of Eastwood LeGrand, the new address of elegant living.

To get a taste of LeGrand living, visit the 2-bedroom model unit soon at the Eastwood City Information Center or contact 421-4243 and 421-4247 now for a viewing appointment at your leisure.

Developer . . .

From page B10

py to be a partner of CPMI, which has committed to comply with our strict procedures in order to earn the Qualibet Seal of Approval."

Qualibet is a member of the American Chemical Society and the American Association of Analytical Chemists, and complies with the ISO 17025 Standards on good laboratory management.

"For 18 years, CPMI has introduced international standards to the local property market, and has won numerous fire protection and occupational health and safety awards from various local and private agencies.

Navarro said water safety assurance, as awarded by such respected testing centers as Qualibet, increases the value of a property as it becomes a more ideal place to live or work in.

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Brittany builds with the future in mind

MAVERICK REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER Brittany Corp. follows a key principle in building masterplanned communities and that is building with the future in mind.

Contrary to a growing urban legend, it takes more than four walls and a roof to make a home. And neither does a row of houses make a community. Terms such as "masterplanning" and "urban renewal" are now being used as buzzwords with only a handful truly understanding the responsibilities that those words entail. Far too many prospective homeowners are being led to believe that the houses they intend to purchase are a part of a larger development.

Brittany is now setting the records straight. While it is easy to claim on paper that a property being developed is master-planned, it is one property developer that takes this concept to heart—translating mere words on paper into concrete structures that fulfill all its promises and more.

Developer's vision

"It all starts with a developer's vision to integrate a community or various communities with required components necessary in providing a higher quality of life for its residents," explained Brittany president Jing Serrano.

"A masterplanned community becomes more ideal to the Philippine setting given that we still don't have an efficient transport system infrastructure. With a masterplanned community, a developer exerts effort in providing its residents everything they could possibly need close by," she continued. "And with Brittany Corp., it should not just be a masterplan. It had to be a masterplan of the finest themed communities."

The Portofino development is a shining and concrete example of this vision of Brittany. This Italian-themed enclave offers a complete range of amenities—anticipating any requirement that the homeowners could possibly need even before they realize that they need it. From deep wells to cable connections, each home is equipped with the modern conveniences to answer the homeowner's every need.

Aside from offering beautiful homes inspired by the grand architecture of southern Italy, Portofino homes recognized the need of families for an open space where everyone can gather. Thus, the courtyard serves as its focal feature. This theme repeats itself not only within the homes but across the community itself—creating clusters among homes where neighbors can gather in a more relaxed setting.

Occupying over 117 hectares of land on the Las Piñas-Cavite-Laguna-Muntinlupa Link Road, it is five minutes away from Alabang's business district and less than 30 minutes away from the central business district of Makati. And part of the Portofino development is a commercial space where residents will be able to shop for both necessities and luxuries.

"Aside from the residential component which could either be horizontal or vertical, masterplanned communities provide for lifestyle amenities, commercial developments, places of worship, schools, business establishments, road networks, even open spaces. How a community is integrated with the rest of the major infrastructure is also a key component," Serrano said.

Urban renewal

But Brittany Corp. has pushed the envelope even further. Brittany Bay, an oasis south of Manila that practically started the recent trend toward urban renewal, is more than a residential development. Its masterplan is geared toward integrating various communities into a dynamic enclave that responds to the various housing needs of different people with unique requirements.

Inspired by the architecture of San Francisco, bay windows and ornate trimmings dominate the landscape. The Brittany Bay development consists of three well-defined districts namely La Posada, Victorianne Row and Viera. And greeting the residents and their guests right along the highway is The Brittany Bay Commercial Center—a commercial development providing a variety of dining, arts and entertainment options for the homeowners.

"Just like how we applied masterplanning to Brittany Bay, urban renewal could be the next big thing in community designs as opposed to urban redevelopment. In Brittany Bay, we have planned for all things one could possibly need—residential areas for multisegments with an array of home choices like single-family homes, town homes, multi-family, even mid and high-rise condo developments. Then you have business centers and commercial areas that complement the total picture because of a unifying theme. With these, I'd like to believe that the future is here," Serrano explained.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Developer raises its water supply standard

By Charles E. Buban

CENTURY PROPERTIES Management Inc. is the real estate property management arm of developer Century Properties Group.

On any given day, it takes care of the welfare of the more than 50,000 individuals that live, work, or visit the various properties it manages.

This is why for CPMI's senior executive vice president Paul Navarro, ensuring the health and welfare of these individuals—including making sure only clean water comes out of their faucets—is always a top priority.

"CPMI is creating safer communities on top of providing management services to the group's commercial and residential properties," Navarro said.

International standards

Organized in 1996, CPMI is the largest private property management company in the country and the first independent property management firm to introduce several international standards to the local property market.

Recently, CPMI reaffirmed such commitment when it signed a memorandum of understanding with Qualibet Testing Services Corp., a food, water, pharmaceutical, cosmetics and veterinary testing facility accredited by the departments of Health, Agriculture as well as Trade and Industry.

"This partnership is our way of reaffirming our company's compliance with the strictest standards in water safety," Navarro explained.

2 months

For two months Qualibet will conduct rigorous scientific water testing in all of CPMI's managed buildings, currently numbering 54.

Aside from the high-rise buildings and establishments managed by CPMI, Qualibet will also test the water quality and safety in Canyon Ranch, Century Properties' first horizontal development in Carmona, Cavite.

Water from concession operators and deep well sources that are used in all these buildings will undergo Qualibet's testing for salmonella count, bacteria count, fecal count and water hardness.

Take caution

"We should not only take caution in the food or water we ingest. Tap water, which we normally use for bathing, brushing our teeth, washing dishes and doing the laundry, may cause anything from a simple rash to diarrhea, or in worst cases, even cancer and death," Qualibet founder and CEO Pinky Pe Tobiano warned.

Tobiano, who is also a licensed chemist, said that water in the ground, middle and top floors of these buildings will be tested separately as there are differences in their temperature.

No shortcuts

"We don't do shortcuts in our tests," Tobiano added. "That's why we are hap-

DEVELOPER/ B9

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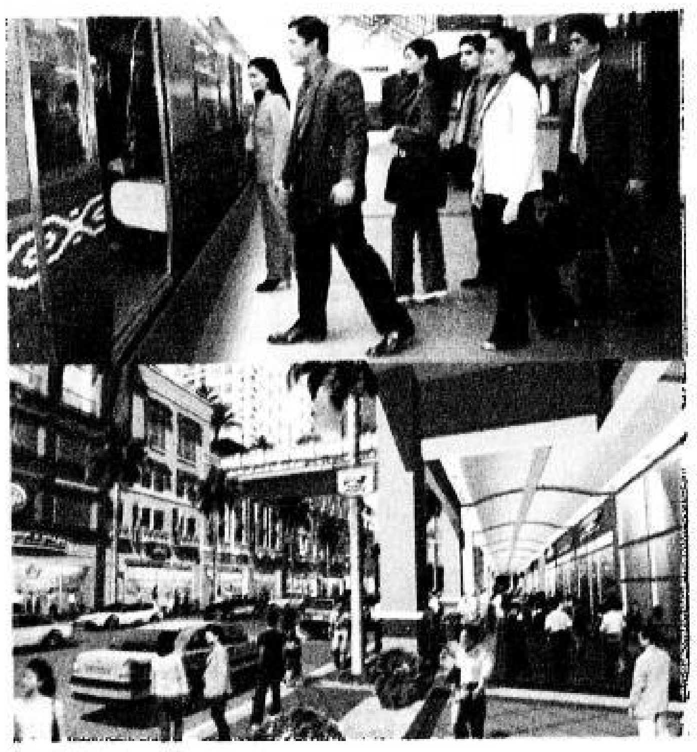

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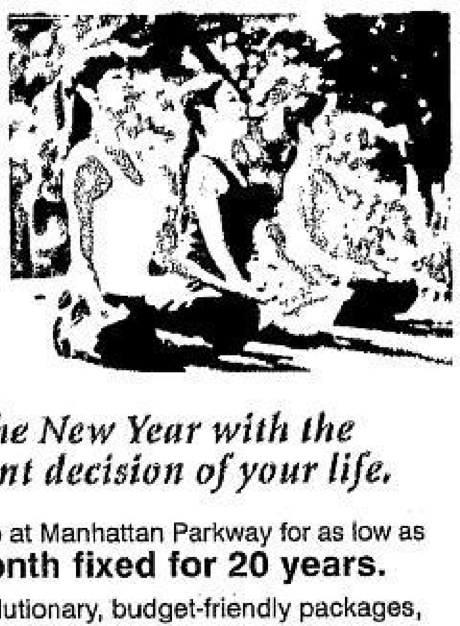
From the LRT-2 along Aurora Boulevard, Ateneo and UP in Quezon City and Manila's university belt are just minutes away. The MRT-3 along EDSA brings Makati, Ortigas and Taft Avenue within easy reach. Both lines join up with the LRT-1, making it easy to go anywhere from Monumento in Caloocan to Baclaran in Parañaque.

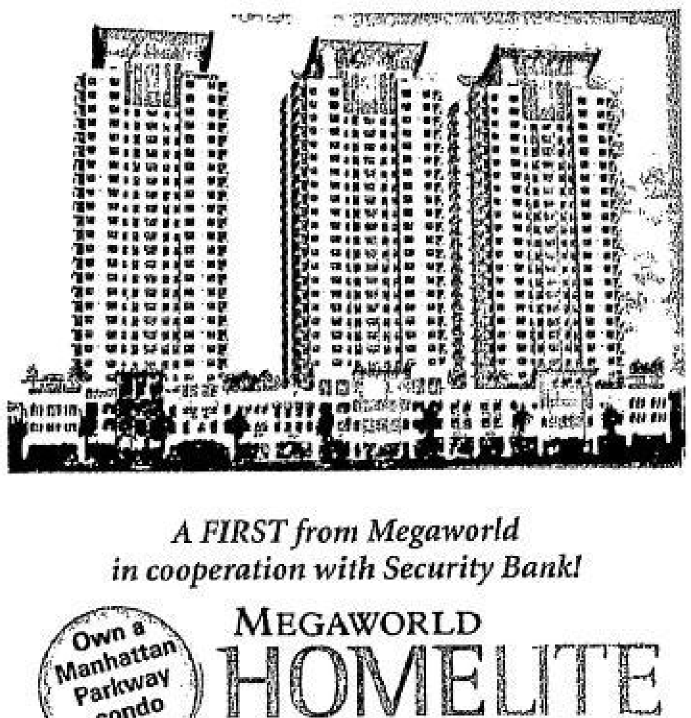
Surrounded by the Araneta Center's hot spots.

Be in the middle of a pulsating lifestyle and leisure center: the Araneta Center. From your home, a four-story **transfer station** with a hotel-style lobby, grand staircase and four passenger elevators brings you to the third level of Gateway Mall, which hosts the Oasis, a unique floating garden. From here, simply walk to the Araneta Coliseum. Or to Rustan's, SM, Shopwise, Ali Mall or Farmers Plaza.

Surrounded by the comforts of home.

When you're done exploring the world outside, your home is just a breath away. Whether it's an executive studio or one-bedroom suite, **Manhattan Parkway** offers you soothing views of the Araneta Center and Manila Bay. What's more, enjoy hours of active play at the fourth-level garden deck. There are trellised walkways, jogging trails, a fitness station, an indoor sauna/spa and a gym. And if that's not enough, a footbridge leads to more play amenities at the upcoming phases.





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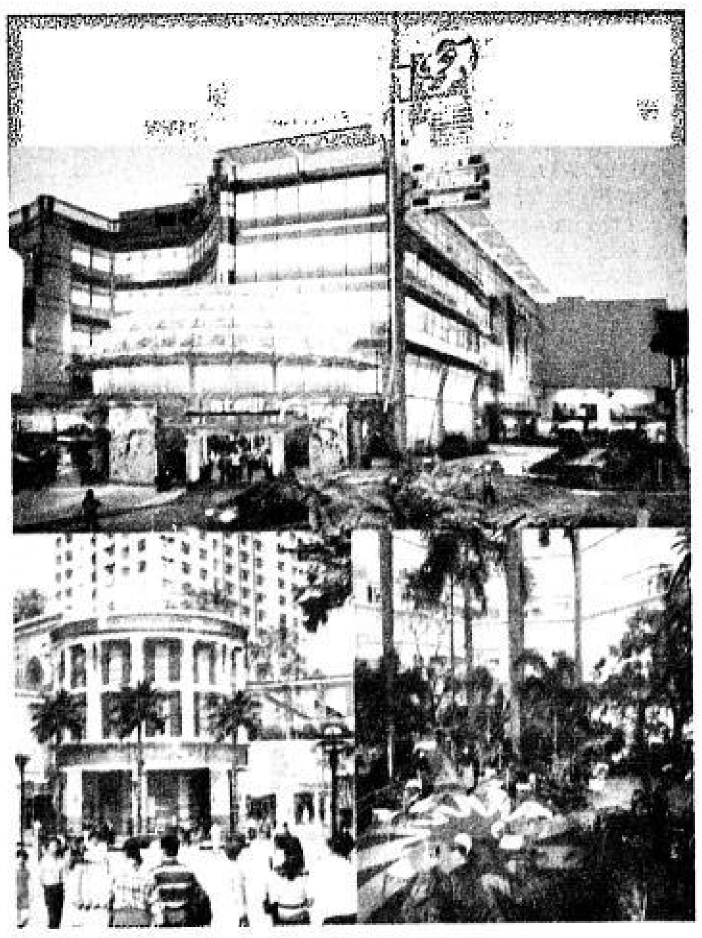

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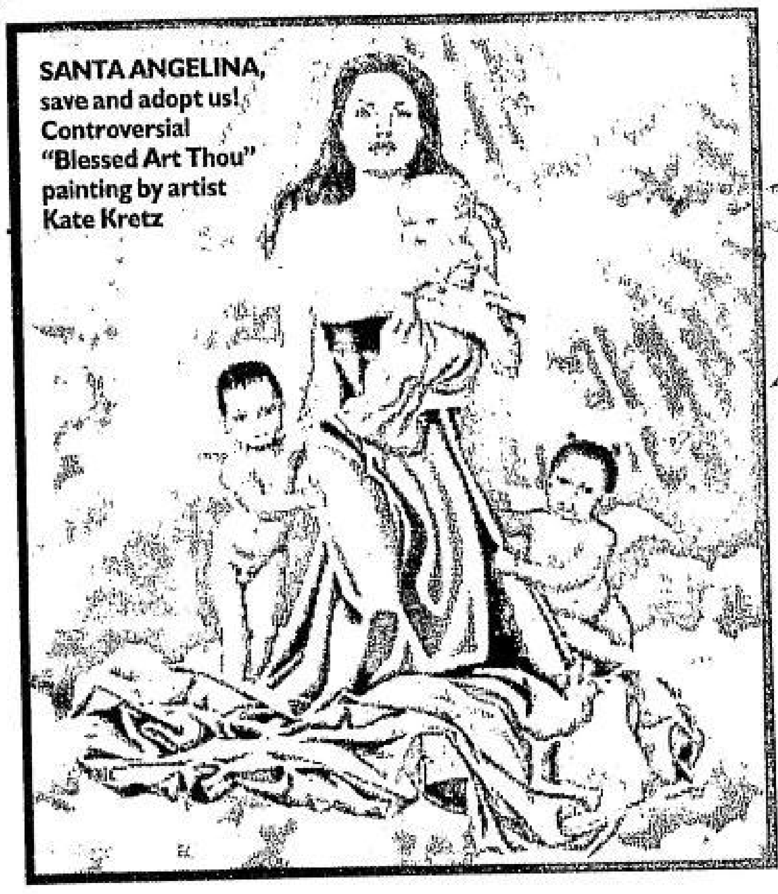
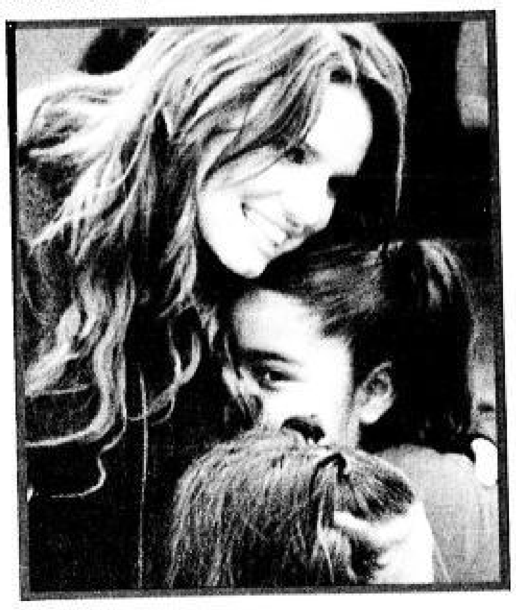


SANTA ANGELINA, save and adopt us! Controversial "Blessed Art Thou" painting by artist Kate Kretz

HOLY-WOOD

When Hollywood hits the high road, indulging in celebrity worship is a real temptation



LET THE (Mexican) children come to me... while the photogs are around.

OUT THE WINDOW

Tals Diaz

THE OTHER NIGHT, I WAS daydreaming about peace and the Holy Family. Oh wait, I meant I was daydreaming about Pax and the Jolie family.

Unless you were living under Ayer's Rock or deep-sea diving and didn't come up for the past year, you've heard the news that "Santa Angelina" Jolie has added a new tyke to her growing brood that looks more like a United Nations Assembly. Lucky for the 3-year-old Vietnamese boy Pax Thien, whose name means "peace" in Latin and "sky" in Vietnamese. Huge collective sigh that he wasn't a Filipino boy, or else he'd be "Pax Langit," and be nicknamed "*Pangit.*" Hmm.

In a People magazine interview, Angelina described Pax as a "very serious, very sweet little boy" who loves soccer. Why, just think, last week, he was playing footy with 352 other kids in the Tam Binh orphanage outside Ho Chi Minh, and now he can ask his mommy if he could play scrimmage with David Beckham. What a lucky noodle!

Talk about a reversal of fortune. From being abandoned at birth by a heroin addict mother, Pax has won a grand lifetime showcase of a) Mama Angie by his side b) insta-lessons in World Geography from new siblings Maddox from Cambodia, Zahara from Ethiopia, and Shiloh Nouvel from Namibia-slash-Angelina's actual insides c) a valid US passport d) a globe-trotting lifestyle and of course e) Brad Pitt calling out to him, "come to Papa." (My gay friends are currently drafting their letters imploring Angelina to adopt them as well, so they could have Brad as their "Papa" too.) Now who doesn't believe in good karma yet?

The good, the bad, the bald

Now I know there are critical folks out there who are wary of the Hollywood golden couple's Good Samaritanism, thinking that it could all be a mere publicity stunt. But I believe it's genuine, and not only that, I think it is absolutely refreshing to read about stars going the distance and doing their part to save the world.

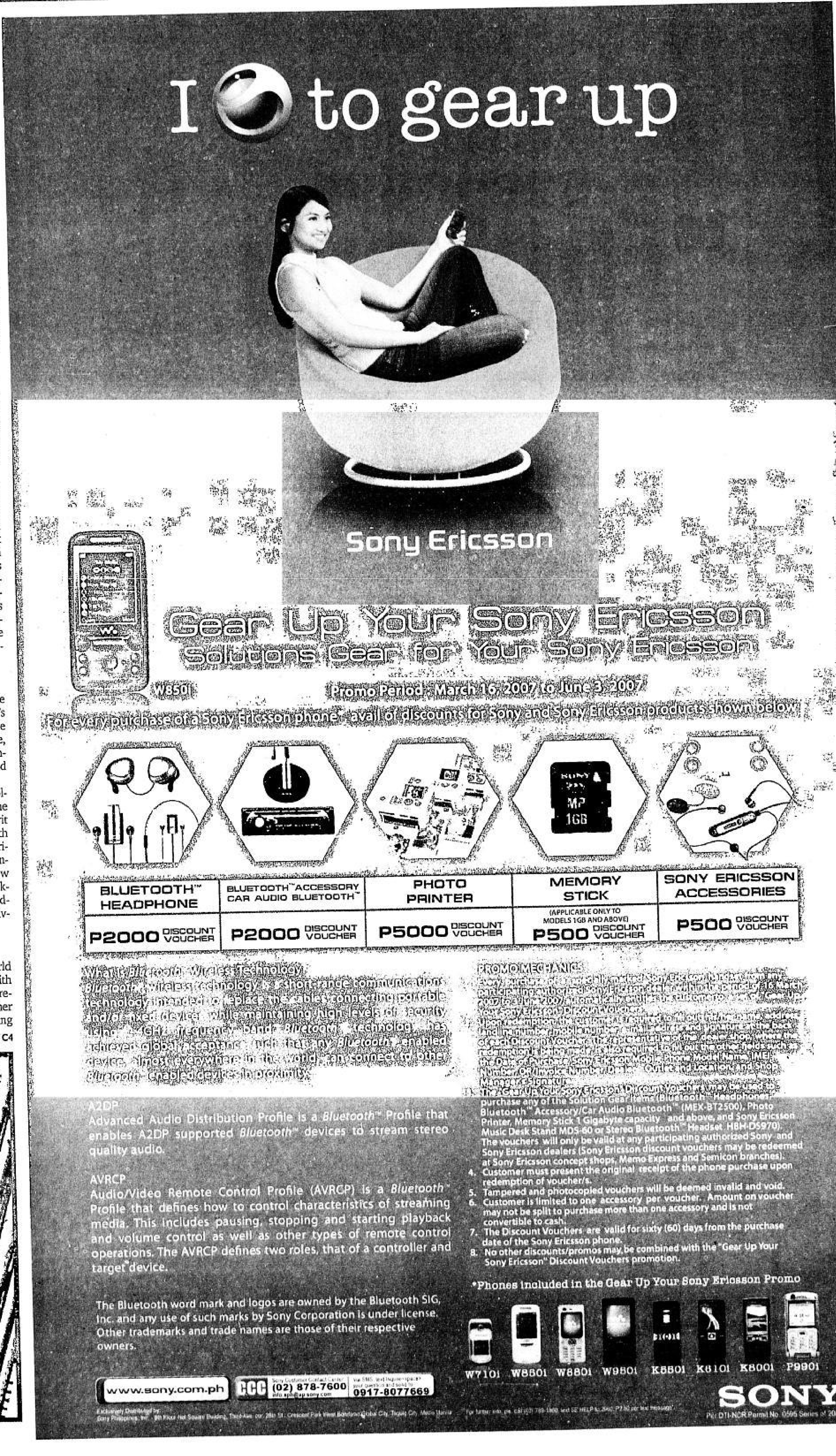
This time, saints win over sinners in the cool-o-meter. Especially when the evil forces of the celebrats and rehabutantes like Lindsay, Brit and Paris continue to induce a cringefest with their over-partying, sex videos, panty-less private parts and stellar rehab and hospital attendances. Ho-hum. Stress on the "Ho." Or how about Donald Trump and Rosie's constant bickering and name-calling over each other's baldness and obesity issues. Really, who gives a sliver of manure?

The Do-gooder bandwagon

Apart from Jolie's project to save the world one child at a time, partner Brad forges on with his building houses for the homeless, most recently in India with Habitat for Humanity. Other illustrious stars with big hearts are also doing

HOLY-WOOD/ C4

BRAD'S Habit for Humanity



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THE ASCENSION. Timex endorser Enchong Dee embraces time and tide.

The Gospel according to Enchong

By Paolo Lorenzana

THE SCOURGING OF ENchong Dee will be pretty damn bloody. There'll be the relentless press, who will sharpen their pitchforks and ready their stones, investigating his relationships with fellow actors and scrutinizing actions to fill up tabloids and the necessary minutes on gossip shows. And there'll be the increasing fan faction of course, that'll devour him like a sacrificial lamb.

Straddling the two regaled realms of local entertainment and sport-getting jiggy on variety shows and winning close to 400 medals as a champion swimmer—Enchong was bound to become prime feed to the public, especially with the prominent cheekbones of a Greco-Roman sculpture and an accompanying physique—the stacked shoulders acquired from two daily hours spent doing countless laps, pronouncing his back's arch and giving the impression he could haul a chariot if he wanted to. One thing tends to lead to another if the right people spot you in some random fashion spread, even if you're living a quiet and conventional life in the province of Bicol, where you spend your days making mom happy by focusing on God and grades rather than missing hours of sleep from a late taping and rushing to an early-morning photo shoot.

In all his glory

"*Ako kasi, gusto kong ma*-challenge *at ma*-test. Ever since *kasi*, love *ko talaga ang* swimming and I just wanted to try new things. Since *dumating ako dito*, *maraming* opportunities *ang nagbukas para sa 'kin*," explains Enchong of his decision in late 2005 to dive into the whirlpool of local entertainment. What sprung-up were a streak of shows (noteworthy performances in the celebrity teen factory that is "Abt ur Luv" as well as a dramatic turn in "Palimos ng Pag-ibig") and a trickle of commercials—an endorsement for Timex and one for KFC, which endeared him to viewers with every bite he took of his chicken-filled sandwich. Besides, apart from the obvious differences, there are a few similarities between competition swimming and show business. There's the need to surface triumphantly above eager contenders even if you have to use the practicality in the former as a necessary evil in the latter; the barely 18-year-old *momma*'s boy dropping trou for the fevered masses or posing shirtless with a glass of milk, conveying 'hard-bodied boy-next-door' to get Cosmo girls cuckoo and Catholic co-eds to declare how 'hot' he is as he drifts through his school's hallways. "*Okay lang naman yun para sa akin eh*," says Enchong with a toothy grin and a gruff drawl from a lack of sleep. "I'm happy *na ganito ang katawan ko* and *kailan pa ako magkakaroon ng ganitong* body? *Hindi ko kasi nakikitang* daring 'cause in every competition that I go to, there are hundreds of thousands of people *na nanonood na naka*-trunks *lang ako. Parang na*-develop *ko naman yung* confidence—and who the hell cares if I take off my pants?"

A zealous group known as the 13-35 female demographic does as well as the battalion of gay bloggers who'll admire the six-pack and question the identity. "*Sa mga intriga—ini*-enjoy *ko lang yung mga yun kasi* they notice me and people, when they watch you—*titignan nila kung 'ganun ka'* or *not. Kumbaga*, it's still publicity," Enchong explains.

Celebrity ascension

It's his religious devotion to school, the smallscreen, and the swim training he'll need for 2008's Sea Games, that distinguishes Enchong from all the other ripe, young guns looking to be deified; what raises him up in arenas that were once the domain of an older brother whose swift launch to fame resulted in a quick fall from grace. "*Kasi sa* swimming, you need discipline, *pero sa* showbiz, *kung ano ang inihain sa iyo kailangan mo kainin. Ako naman, syempre baguhan, so talagang kinakain ko lang ngayon*," Enchong admits, exhibiting his ability to transcend the flesh, apply the discipline that's driven him to sporting glory, and swim eagerly with the sharks of showbiz. He'll sit humbly aware before an imminent storm that could blow Milby mania to smithereens; all witnessing the moment he gets beamed up onto the celebrity forefront. 'Cause after a bloody scourging, everyone loves a good guy who can arise a messiah.

> **It's his religious devotion to school, the small screen, and the swim training he'll need for 2008's Sea Games, that distinguishes Enchong from all the other ripe, young guns**

Enchong Dee

The thing about fame is that: You're treated better than everyone

The thing I love most about what I do is: I'm busy everyday

People might be surprised to know that: I eat four times a day

The most important thing I've ever learned is that: You can't trust everybody

I wish when I started off I'd been told to: be alert of things around you

The worst thing that ever happened to me was that: I fell in the fish pond during kindergarten

And what this taught me was: Listen to oldies when they tell you not to be too close to bullies

The secret to happines is: respect!

My best ever outfit consisted of a: polo, coat ... *basta* formal! And oh, my timex watch!

My Super! Saturday night consists of: friends from Bicol and just hang out in our house

The soundtrack to my life would include: Cannonball by Damien Rice

If I was invisible for a day, I would: Travel all over Egypt and get every treausre I can get

The thing that makes me most angry is: when I'm hungry

If I was the most powerful person on earth: I would order people and get every treausre I can get

The best thing about family is that: You have someone to turn to all the time.

When I'm gone, they'll probably say: "*sayang naman*, miss *ko na sya*!"

If money was no option: "I dont think so!"

When I retire, I would like: to buy a house in the province and chill

The world would be a much better place if: Americans will continue their isolation system

My hero is: my dad!

The thing that makes my life worth living is: Everytime I get to influence people

My greatest hope for the future is: for the Philippines to be rich again

The worst thing somebody said about me was: "*Nagbago na sya, ang yabang na nya*"

My favorite moments are when: I was held second honors in High school

My most embarrassing moment was when: I fell in the fish pond

Describe the perfect woman: God-fearing, *maasikaso*, knows to cook well, and open-minded

Where are you most ticklish: in my funny bone, near my ribs

What is the one piece of clothing that makes you feel sexy: Briefs from Bench

What can one do that makes you feel sexy: Just appreciate me

What can one do that guarantee your being seduced: simply eyes

What secret seduction technique you have in your sleeve: none!

What was the last thing you could not say no: Swimming competition!

What makes up for a great kiss: When both people brushed their teeth! *haha*

What is on your bedside table: homework and scripts!

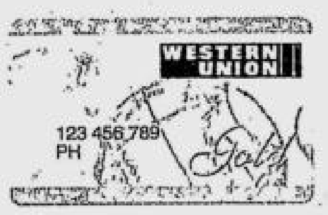
Im saving up for: A laptop

My biggest indulgence is: to be a dean's lister

My current state of mind is: I'm rich and famous! *haha*

My five favorite words are: Grabe! Thank you! Welcome! Thank god! I'm happy for you!

I aspire to be: an Icon



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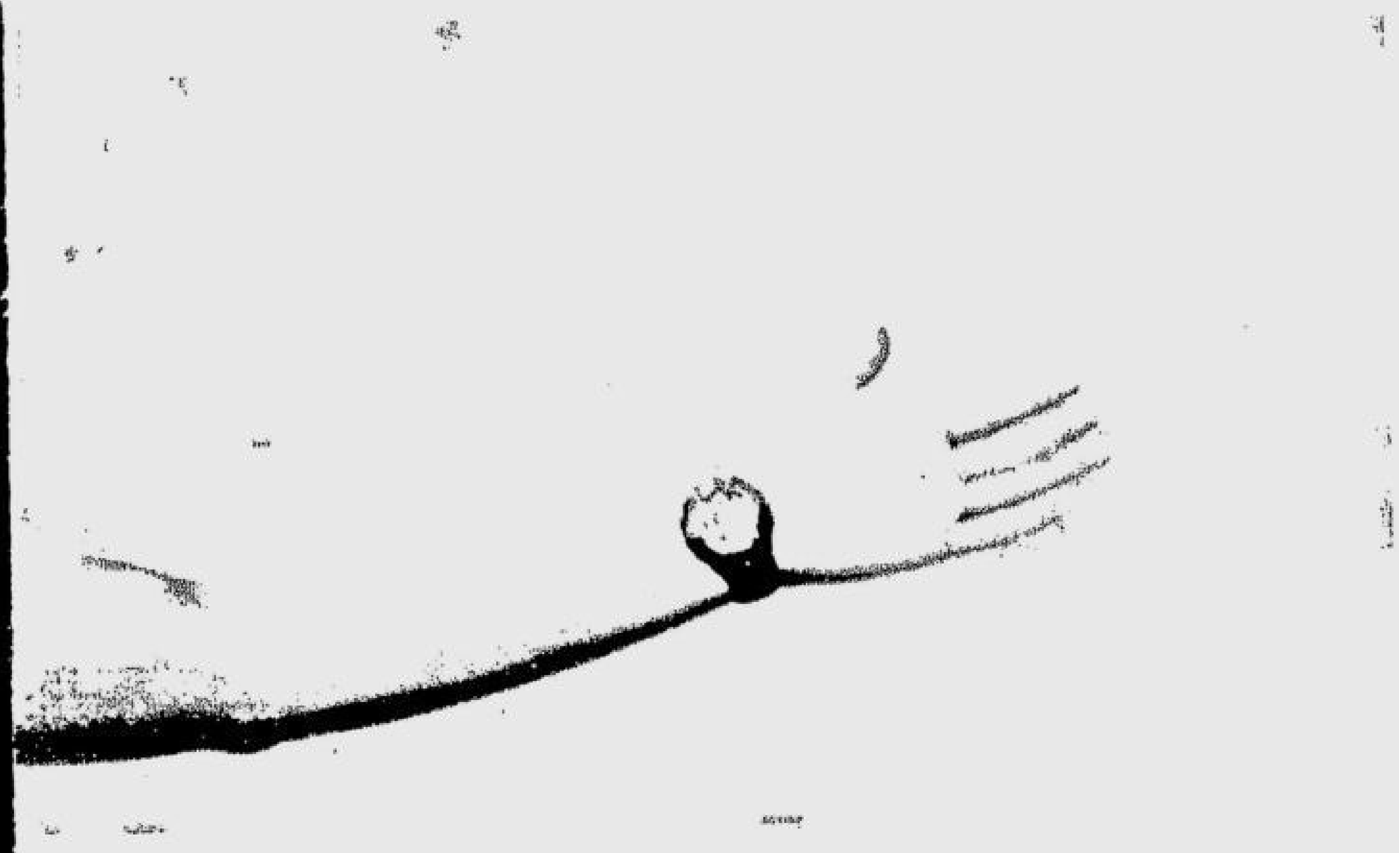

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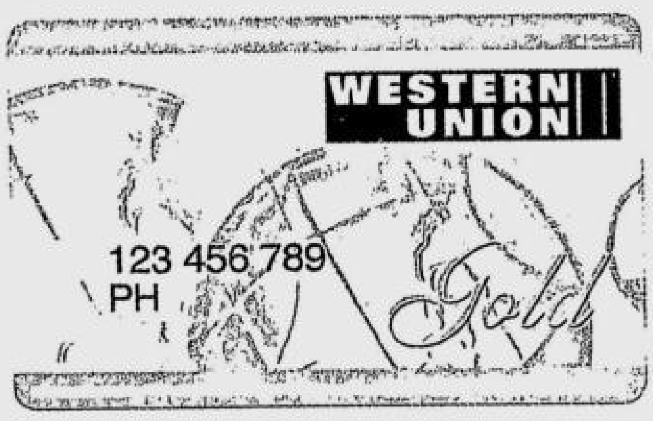
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WESTERN UNION
FAST, RELIABLE, WORLDWIDE MONEY TRANSFER

HOLY-WOOD

PHOTO FROM PEOPLE MAGAZINE

ANGIE brings Pax on earth.

VIỆT NAM
ÔNG

PAX-PORT. Welcome to the Celebresphere!

From page C1

their part in changing people's lives in very big ways. Last January, "The Oprah" opened a $40 million, 52-acre school for disadvantaged South African girls in Johannesburg. Her donation even prompted former South African president Nelson Mandela to praise her, saying "This is not a distant donation you've made, but a project that is clearly close to your heart."

Then there's über-star Madonna, who funds six orphanages through her Raising Malawi charity and is setting up an orphanage for 4,000 children in a village outside the capital, Lilongwe. Richard Gere, certified buddy of the Dalai Lama, has been a longtime social activist and philanthropist, and is committed to the ongoing search for a cure for AIDS, most especially in India. Kinda makes your heart swell huh? Buddha would have been proud.

Apparently, this Hollygood bandwagon is spreading. Or is it just really, really good publicity? I'd wager that there are some stars who haven't heard the proverb, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret..." I call to the stands... Jessica Simpson.

Recently, Jessica donated a seven-passenger mini-van to the Casa Hogar Elim orphanage in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. The Mexican kids then gifted her with a handmade necklace and used the money they made from their handcrafted jewelry to pay for a mariachi band to serenade Jessica as their way of saying *"muchas gracias."* Okay, so maybe I'm raising one eyebrow because all her grinning photos with orphanage ward Mama Lupita and the Mexican kids looked *un pocito* poser (reminded me a bit of our own politicos in this season of trying to win votes via fake smiles). But perhaps that's already my personal bias fueling the cynicism. Fine, publicity stunt or not, I have to say that Jessica's a little notch higher in my book because if there are two things I love in this world, it's Mexico and kids.

HALF-BAKED holiness? Jessica Simpson is all smiles handing over the keys of a new mini-van to a Mama Lupita of a Mexican orphanage.

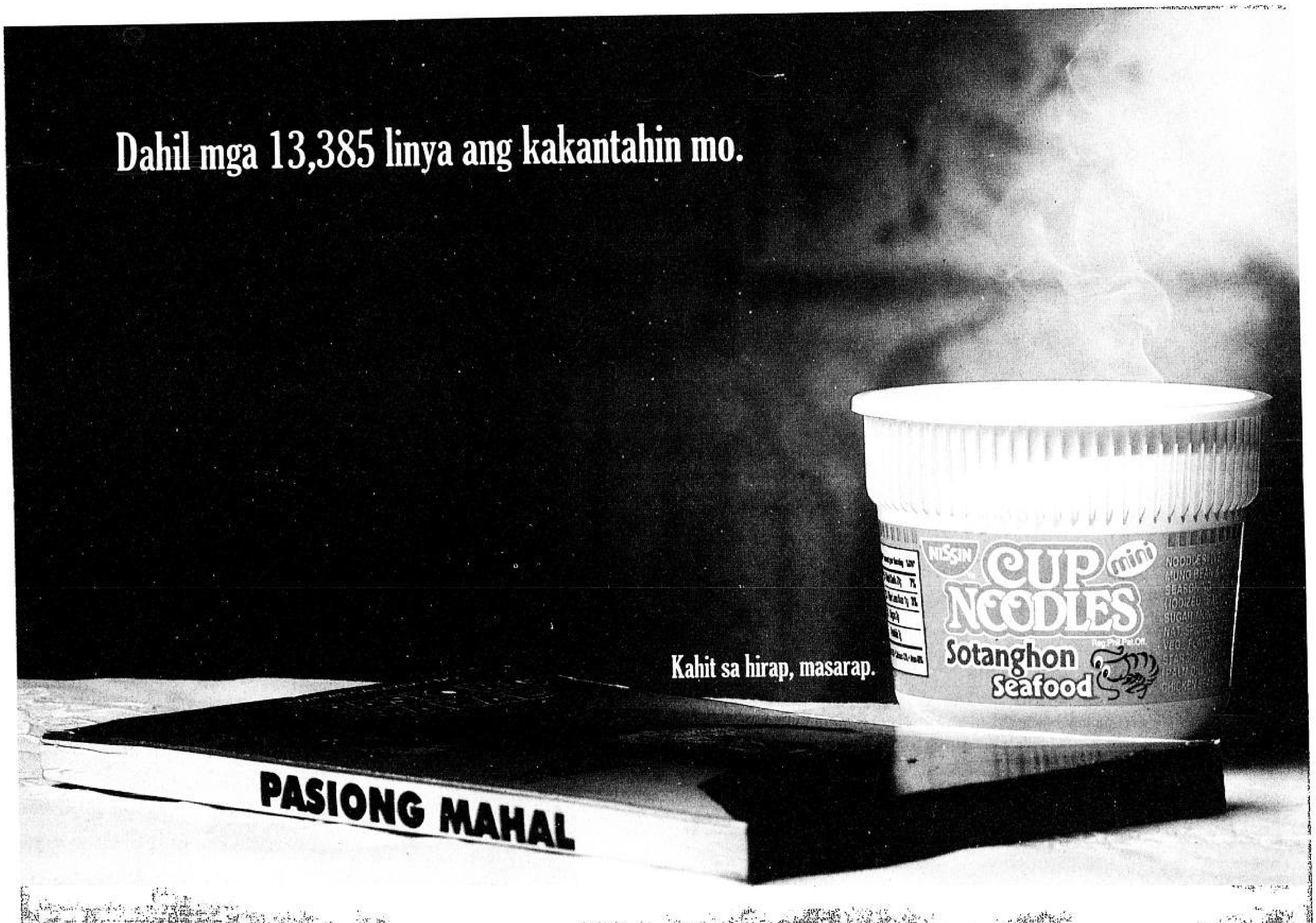
So if Mexican kids are happy, then *me alegre tambien!*

Celebrity worship

While faith, charity and good works may have been the causes championed centuries ago by Jesus, Gandhi, St. Ignatius and Mother Theresa, you have to admit that having Angelina, Brad, Madonna, Richard and Oprah on the side of the forces of good does give holiness a great PR boost, because they're the ones who are worshipped, deified and emulated by the multitude.

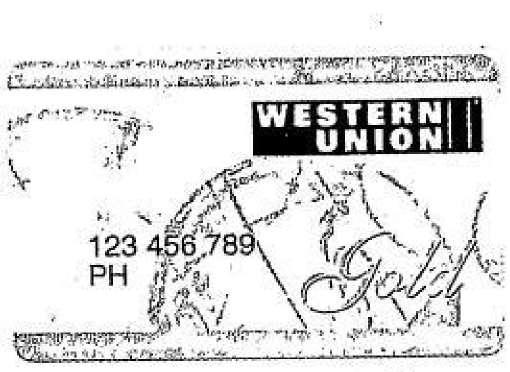
Think about it, way back then, Jesus was a celebrity Himself—He had his own entourage, made starstruck women weep, and had hordes of followers (plus he was the life of the party when he changed water into wine). Today, though the A-list celebs can't walk on water or rise from the dead (except maybe Anna Nicole Smith), they do have their own star powers that can change, influence, and make a real difference in the world—and inspire others to do so too.

So blessed are the peacemakers, both past and present! If I got my beatitudes right, they shall be called the children of God. "Let the children come to me," said Christ. Two thousand years later, Angelina Jolie is saying the same thing.



Sotanghon
Pancit Canton
CUP NOODLES
Sotanghon Seafood
Seafood

Ngayong Semana Santa,
mag-seafood na.
Handog ng Nissin.



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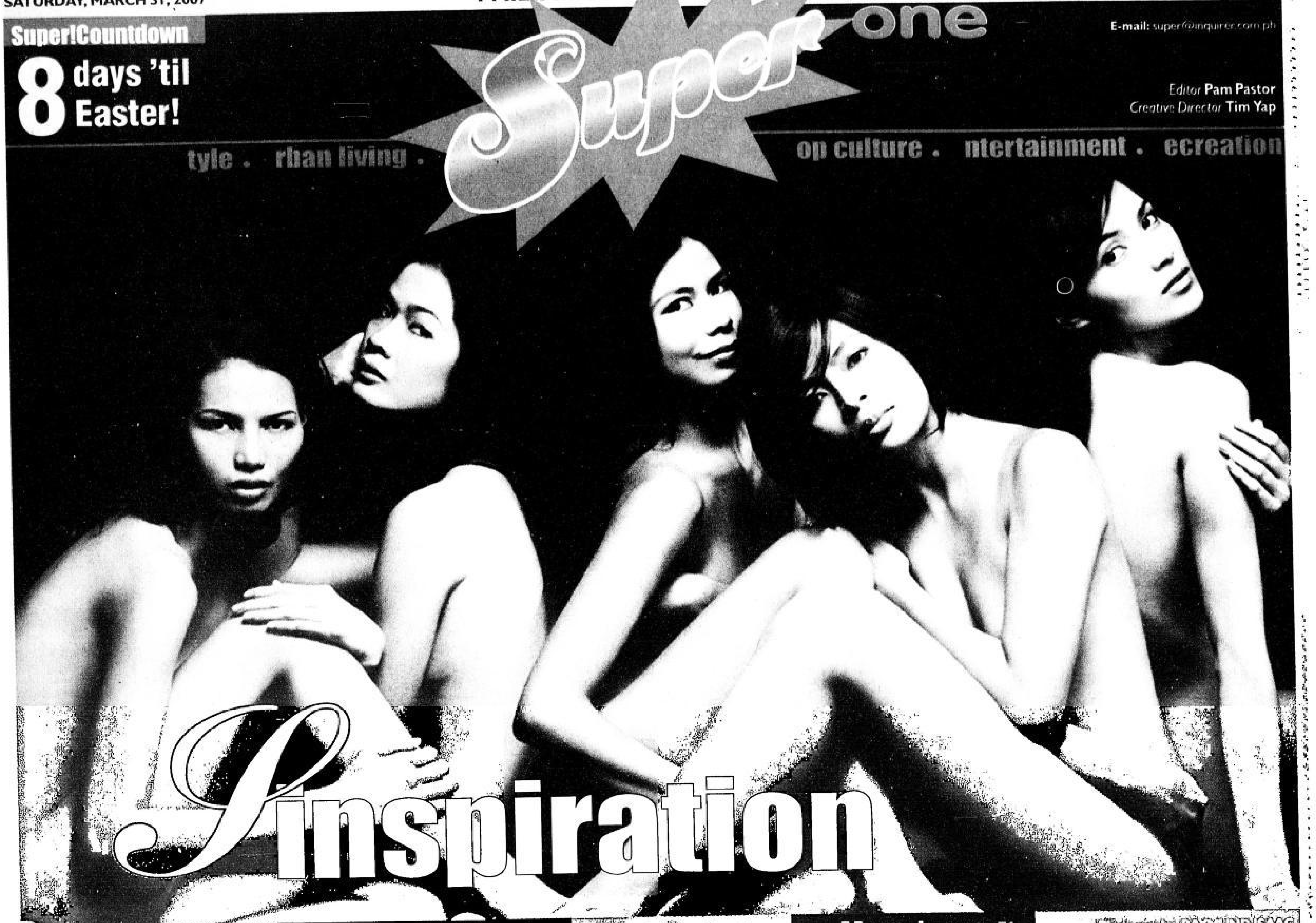
Super one
E-mail: super@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Pam Pastor
Creative Director Tim Yap
tyle . rban living . op culture . ntertainment . ecreation

Super!Countdown
8 days 'til Easter!



Holywood starring Santa Angelina page C1

Fashion's 'anointed ones' according to the Phil. Tatler page D2

Enchong Dee walks on water page C2

Maundy page F1 **Mel Gibson breaks a commandment**

Photography RAYMUND ISAAC
Concept and Styling ANTON SAN DIEGO
Makeup LEO ROSADAS for Bedhead
Hair BREN SALES for Bedhead
Cover Stars RIA BOLIVAR, JOAN BITAGCO, RAYA MANANQUIL, RISSA SAMSON and GRACE TAGLE as seen in the Philippine Tatler Fashion Issue

LEVI'S® COPPER™ JEANS

The latest from Levi's® denimwear fashion, the
Copper™ Jeans goes
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The copper rivets,
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HOW IT ALL

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Jacob Davis then pa ted the idea of Copper rivet jeans, which became the prototype for the legendary Levi's® 501 jeans.

COPPER NUGGETS

All that glitters is not gold. Some may think Copper is the poor distant relative of gold, but did you know that Copper is rarer than precious gold? Copper is the only metal other than gold that has natural color. Other metals are either gray or white. It is man's oldest metal, dating back more than 10,000 years. 10,000 years ago, cave dwellers used Copper axes as tools for survival. Today, surgeons save lives and precious bloo by using Copper-clad scal Copp
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One of the
found in Isr
Copper instead o
skins. The scroll contains clues to a still undiscovered treasure. Copper was associated with the Greek goddess Aphrodite in mythology and alchemy, owing to its lustrous beauty and its ancient use in producing mirrors. Copper is the standard benchmark for electrical conductivity. It conducts electrical current better than any other metal except silver. Copper cookware is regarded as the best by chefs around the world because of its advantages in high heat transfer (the highest of any material used in cooking
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because the value of a
cannot be more than the cost to make it.

CURVED POCKETS

The core line features jeans with skewed back pockets and elaborately scooped front pockets.

LEATHER TWO HORSE PATCH

The recognisable Levi's® Two Horse patch is made of genuine leather. It is also irregularly shaped with a worn-in look.

UNRIVA D COPPER

tlines
s, accentuates
Levi's® Arcuate, and also appears on side seams as reinforced stitching.

ORIGINAL WAISTBAND

The inside waistband lets you own a piece of the Copper history. The statement: "This pair of jeans is inspired by the 'patent riveted overall' made of denim by Levi Strauss & Jacob Davis in 1873" signifies strength and durability, just like the pair of ultra-reliable Copper-riveted work pants worn by miners in the 1800s. Learn more about the Copper heritage at
http ww.ap.levi.com/ind
edirect=phunk

MOTIF

Copper mo he handcrafted button and rivets are in stained classic Copper colour.

DETAILED POCKET LININGS

The seasonal line will bear the same insignias plus print detail on pocket linings for all jeans, and on the inside waistband of women's jeans. It will also feature leather flaps over back pockets and leather patches on pocket scoops.

CLASSIC DENIM FINISHING

The jeans come in mid-to dark-tone classic finishing over red cast denim, with subtle contrasts and effects that include exaggerated whiskers, paper crease marks, and a hint of scraping. The finishes come in n es that
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FITTED FOR YOU

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and Low Crotch Cropped (jean). The seasonal line for women includes denim shorts, mini skirts and A-line skirts.

PUT ON YOU LEVI'S® COPPER™ JEANS

So walk the talk and strut your very own pair of Levi's® Copper™ Jeans.

NEW LEVI'S® COPPER™ JEANS
AN ORIGINAL. UNEARTHED

PHOTOGRAPHY: ERWIN BARLETA OF EDGE OF LIGHT; MAKE UP: XENG ZULUETA, CLAIRE DIOKNO, MICKEY SEE AND BENJIE OF SHU UEMURA; HAIR: FELICITY SON, NANTE ALINGASA AND RICKY DIOKNO OF KIEHL'S STYLIST SERIES

THE UNDERGROUND. Style mavericks, eccentrics who go beyond the norm to explore fashion's inner depths

PHOTOGRAPHY: RAYMUND ISAAC
HAIR AND MAKE UP: ROBBIE PINERA OF LANCOME

THE ICON, THE MUSE. The elusive Bea Valdes

FOLDED AND HUNG STREETCAST SHOW AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER

FLAUNT IT. Joey Mead's ample assets

F ME I'm famous

TALES from the hood

SHORTY blitz

NEUTRALLY shady

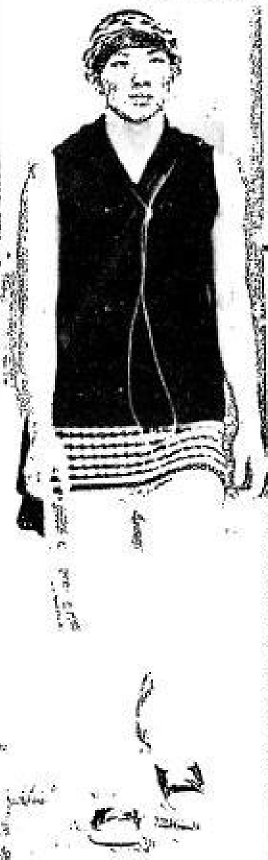
SLIMANE inspiration

NEO nonchalance

CAPRI cool

STRIPE strip

PEDESTRIAN crossing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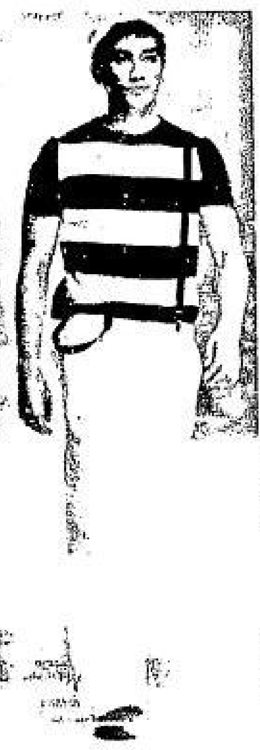
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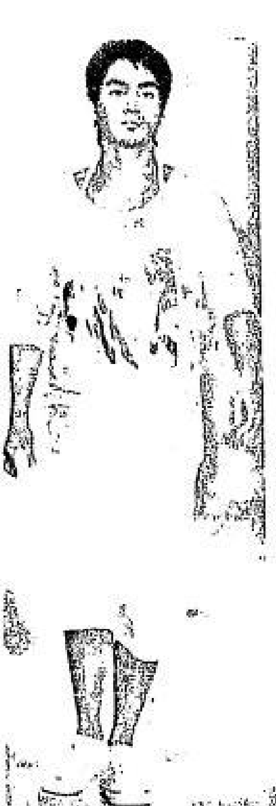

GOLDEN shower

VESTED interest

Tim Yap

IN THE NAME OF THE FASHION, and of the style, and of the whole season, Manila has become one big runway, with a closet bursting with new energy and inspiration—yes, thank God we are moving forward.

I was on my way to hear the gospel of fragrance from **Inno Sotto** for his new ISM scents when Philippine Tatler editor **Anton San Diego** showed me a bible of images featuring fashion's fiercest disciples.

For one, he gathered all of the front row style prophets (aka fashion editors) and captured them in a single frame, much like our Super! editors editorial last year. "There was no backbiting or dagger looks, rather, a pleasant get-together of Philippine's fashion authorities," mused Anton on the scene's muses. But of course, cattiness, just like pashminas, are so over.

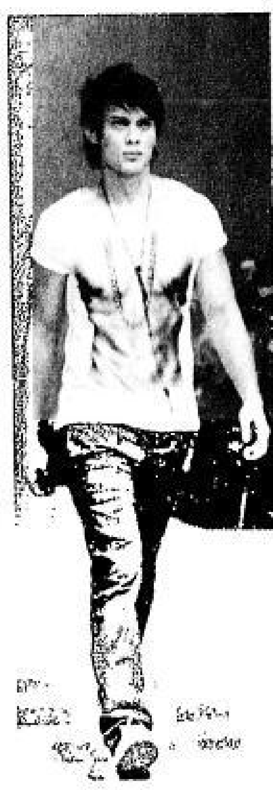
What's more, this issue's Super! cover image features the supermodels who've obviously fasted for all their lives (or they're just really genetically gifted) for the Tatler's take on the Herb Ritts' Cindy-Naomi-Stephanie-Christy iconic image. To me, this photo is the fashion counterpart of The Last Supper.

As it is in heaven

ROBI LOLIN, HEAD DESIGNER OF Folded & Hung's homily was all about strides and stripes.

The FH Streetcast Fashion Show at the World Trade Center had 100 models crossing the pedestrian lane of a ramp set to a heavenly beat.

"I got my inspiration from beautiful people on the street with different looks that include a rocker, school boys and girls, and a Japanese-inspired fashionista." Robi believes that this collection will inspire and remind others that "everyone could be beautiful, even if they are just walking on the street." Amen to that. *Tim Yap*


BODY language by F&H

THIS is not Tim Yap

SUMMER punkin'

I'M not pregnant

TWIN PICKS. One is folded, the other is hung

ROCK steady by Robi Lolin

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CURTAINS UP. Front row

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PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK NICDAO; CONCEPT AND STYLING: ANTON SAN DIEGO; MAKE UP XENG ZULUETA, CATHY CANTADA AND BENJIE ANGELES FOR SHU UEMURA; HAIR: BENJIE ANGELES AND OGIE RAYEL OF KIEHL'S STYLIST SERIES

AS SEEN ON THE PAGES OF THE APRIL FASHION ISSUE OF THE PHILIPPINE TATLER

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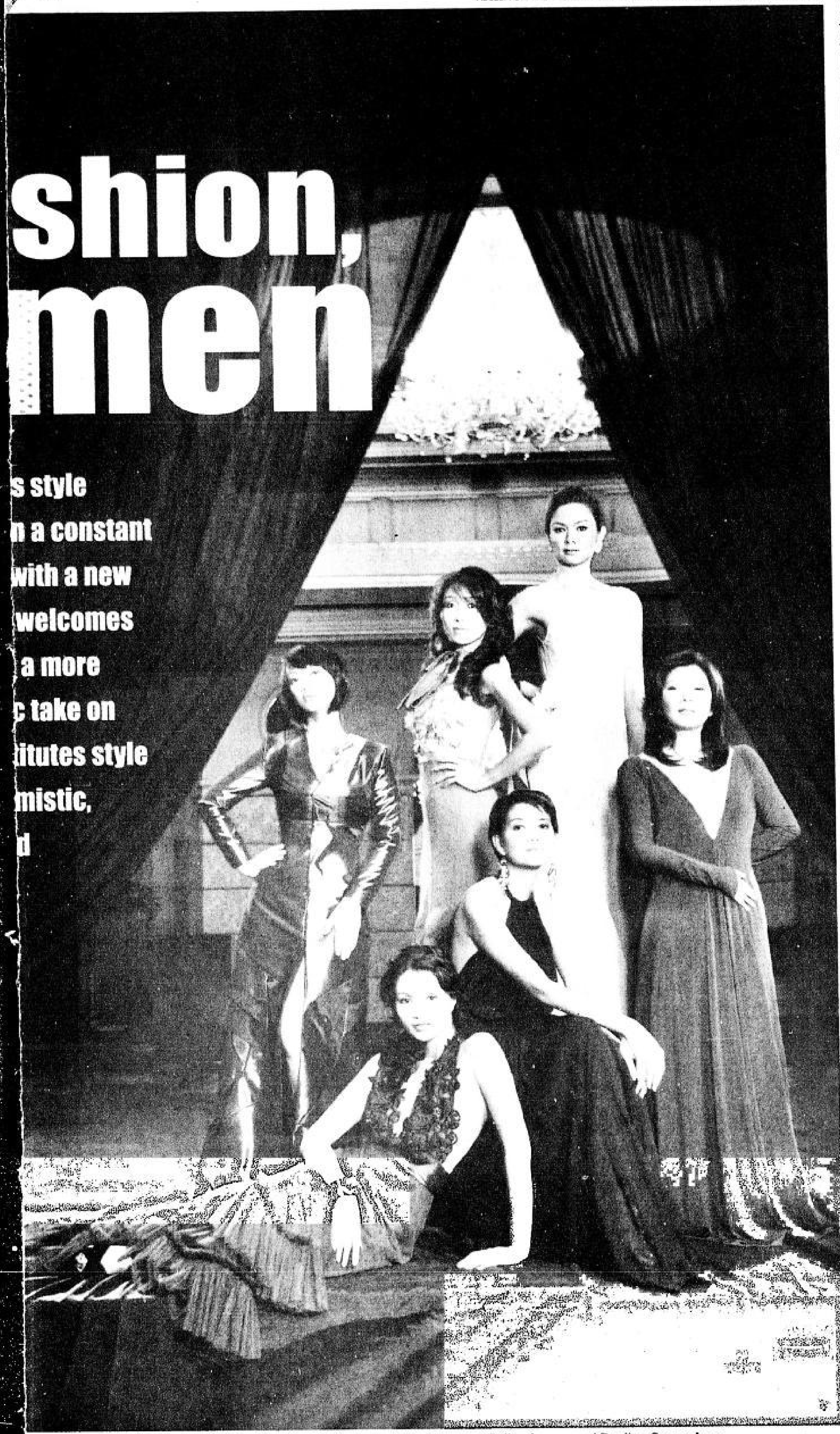

hits Jenni Epperson, Carla Sibal, Apples Aberin-Sadhwani, Mel Cuevas, Celine Lopez and Pauline Suaco-Juan

'ARTEESANS' FASHION SHOW AND ART EXHIBIT AT THE 'I LOVE YOU' STORE

INSIDE A GIRL'S CLOSET. Tanya Escaler and Ornusa Cadness lead the funkfest of an underground showcase of tee shirt artistry

PHOTOGRAPHY: MARK NICDAO; HAIR: BEA MISA; MAKE UP: BENJIE ANGELES FOR SHU UEMURA

DESIGNERS EXPO. New avant-guardians Puey Quinones, Jun Escario and Ivar Aseron

nake our fashion issue a major
preached Anton about their
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venues—eight locally and one
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he first ever Asian supermod-
proud **Anna Bayle** (now pro-
ee), no less. Shot by **Nigel Barker**, again, no less. Other fashion stars featured are **Tina Maristela-Ocampo,** (whose daughter Betina calls me Tito Tim—shudder!) and **Bea Valdes,** as a **Marlene Dietrich** apparition. Somehow, the Tatler's fashion scriptures always strike a cord with someone like myself who is a true blue apostle of style.

Style surprises greet us at every turn. Look around you, new boutiques, aspiring designers, wannabe models, fashion schools are multiplying like loaves. This season alone we have the Fashion Week procession and the MetroWear parade among many other catwalk miracles.

A week ago I hopped over to the I Love You store where they staged their "Arteesans" show. The I Love You girls asked different artists and personalities to submit artworks that I Am Super! awardees **Sharon Atilo, Corinne Ching** and **Mimi Sanson** translated into tee shirts among many other artistic permutations. The cramped store space became the venue for the mini show—part performance art, part graduate school fashion showcase and part poetry reading. In lieu of a microphone, the host read her poem, anecdotes on the lowly tee, on a megaphone—ahluvet!

Pinoy chic

The weekend came and I jumped to the World Trade Center to catch Folded and Hung's Streetcast, a culmination of a search for 100 models-amateur and professional alike. I sorta missed the shown(fret not, ramp photos appear on this spread), but I still caught the Big Fish party time, when **Mark Vedo** of Slinky (he was here last year with **Boy George** if you still remember) spun his tracks to the delight of the partyphiles present. I spotted a sea of Brazilian models in a scene reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah. Yes, they are here to stay.

Speaking of the Brazilians, there has been a backlash of the influx of these Latin lookers in our shores who've been getting the bulk of bookings this side of the casting couch. Don't get me wrong, I am very pro-Filipino, but in fairness to them, just like our local mannequins, they are known to be very professional and enthusiastic about work—no divas here.

I've spoken to some of the fly-in models, and even they are complaining about the low wages that they are getting. Somehow the Brazilians are being blamed for bringing down the standard fees of the local models. I think you guys have to ask the agents here, you know. Professional Models Association of the Philippines (PMAP) and Talent Agents Organization (TAO), your move.

On the retail side, walk around your favorite mall and check out your favorite local brands and see how far they've come. Bench, Folded and Hung, Bayo, Penshoppe, Freeway, Solo, Kamiseta et al have stepped up to the next level. Global brands are flocking to our shores. I just met an executive from Fred Segal's who visited Manila to check out the scene, and, just like all visiting style dignitaries, from **Nicholas Ghesquiere** to the Queer Eyes, they were unanimous in saying that, "Filipinos are so chic."

More than that, the scene's style sphere is in a constant evolution, with a new guard that welcomes new blood, a more democratic take on what constitutes style and is optimistic, never jaded.

To quote the Tatler's last word on the F word, "Fashion is such an active world, peopled with creative denizens. We will never miss an opportunity to be a part of it."

HISTORY SETS THE TONE FOR LEVI'S® NEWEST LINE:
THE LEVI'S® COPPER COLLECTION

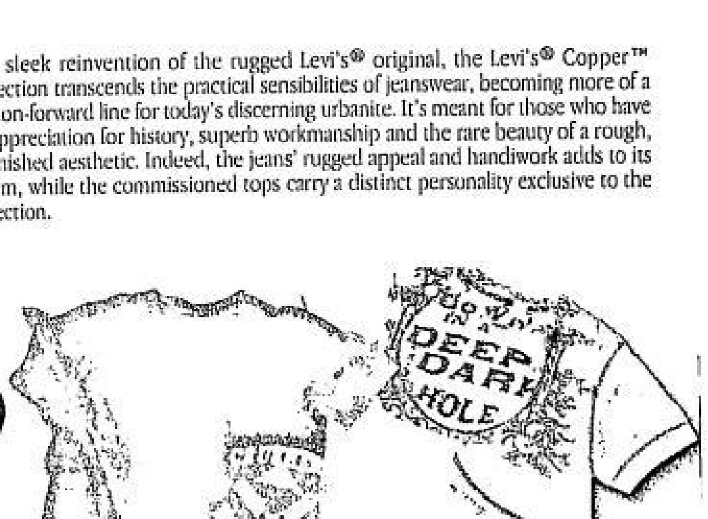
Looking back at history is a common practice for most fashion labels, yet few brands have the luxury of such a rich and colorful heritage to draw from. This 2007, the world's favorite brand for jeans, Levi's® looks back to its rugged roots to create its newest collection, taking inspiration from the distinctive copper rivets used in the original work pants patented by Levi Strauss and tailor Jacob Davis in 1873.

With its new Copper™ Collection, Levi's® comes full circle, creating thoroughly modern jeans that are directly influenced by the first denims worn by miners during the California Gold Rush. It is this faithful devotion to the unique heritage of Levi's® that has led to the line's best innovations.

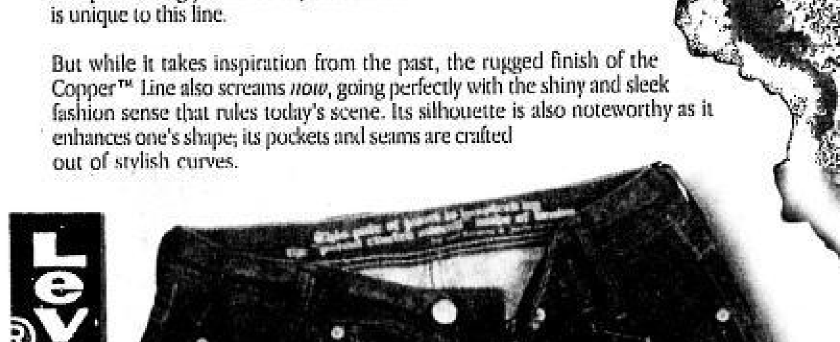
The design team took the "worn-out" feel of the miner's working pants and translated it into the line's style statement. That's why the Levi's® Copper™ Collection is distinguished by the raw feel of the denim, attributed to the strictly all-natural fabric used to manufacture the jeans. The seams are also painstakingly hand-sewn, a much-valued handcrafted feature that is unique to this line.

But while it takes inspiration from the past, the rugged finish of the Copper™ Line also screams *now*, going perfectly with the shiny and sleek fashion sense that rules today's scene. Its silhouette is also noteworthy as it enhances one's shape; its pockets and seams are crafted out of stylish curves.

As a sleek reinvention of the rugged Levi's® original, the Levi's® Copper™ Collection transcends the practical sensibilities of jeanswear, becoming more of a fashion-forward line for today's discerning urbanite. It's meant for those who have an appreciation for history, superb workmanship and the rare beauty of a rough, unfinished aesthetic. Indeed, the jeans' rugged appeal and handiwork adds to its charm, while the commissioned tops carry a distinct personality exclusive to the collection.



Unearth the raw, classic beauty of Levi's® Copper™ now at selected Levi's® stores nationwide.



And what jeanswear line is complete without a spanking assortment of tops? This line doesn't end with the denim, but extends to the specially designed tees made in collaboration with New York-based design group Barking Irons. This firm, which takes its name from the 19th century term for pistols, is known for their historically-inspired graphics that reflect the culture of old New York. It's the perfect accompaniment to the "artifact" theme of the line.

NEW LEVI'S COPPER JEANS
AN ORIGINAL. UNEARTHED

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CHARMAINE PALERMO

WILMA DOESNT

RIA BOLIVAR

ASSUNTA DA ROSSI

GEORGINA WILSON IN TYLER

BIANCA KING

DIVINE LEE IN GUCCI

DONITA ROSE

RUFFA GUTIERREZ-BEKTAS IN IVARLUSKI ASERON

Something funny happened on the way to the Next Top Model Mansion ...

By James Gabrillo and Tals Diaz
Photos by Daniel Tan

SO WE'VE SEEN THE first few episodes of the model search knock-off, er, franchise. We have a few things to say about "Philippines' Next Top Model." Scratch that like a cat, actually we have *a lot* to say about this show which should have been entitled, "Alin ang Naiba?" See, in spite of our keen powers of observation, it's really hard to spot the differences between the aspiring top models. Not to mention, their personalities make bond paper seem like better conversationalists.

It's also hard not to consider this reality show as a friggin' sitcom. Allow us to enumerate.

- On the pilot episode, they showed the hopefuls actually getting—*homaygad! Ahluvet!*—an actual bikini wax! Shown on primetime TV! So these girls had their legs splayed while their punanis were getting de-fuzzed! Girls were moaning and writhing in pain, except for this one girl who was busy eating a banana the whole time!!! *Sarap ba ng saging!?*
- The first challenge of the girls was to accomplish the incredibly difficult task of ... finding a bed. So the girls frenziedly rushed into the rooms, looking for their elusive beds. You know, it's really not that hard considering the beds are at the center of the room. Tell that to one girl, who proudly declared the carpet as her bed. "Dis is mine!" she said as she clapped excitedly. Hooray!
- When Ruffa Guttierrez-Bektas (we like saying her name aloud) announced the final 14 contestants, each of the girls reacted ... like ... well, let's just say Ferdinand Marcos' corpse had more emotion. We've seen raffle winners get more teary-eyed with joy even if they just won cell phone load.

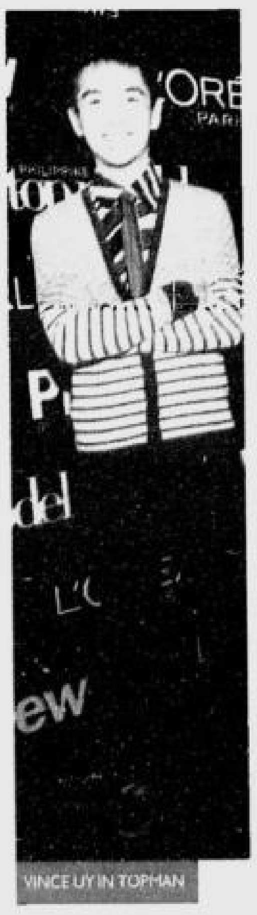
Fiercely fab

- In the American version, the models receive "Tyra Mail." In our local version, the girls get "Ruffa Text! Ruffa Text!" Whatduh? It's not even catchy! We would've preferred "Bektas Beep" or even "Ruffa Ring" or better yet, "Ruffa Rigno."
- What's with the curtains in the background of the judges' panel, that look like they've been unearthed from your deceased lola's *baul*? In fairness, they do stand out as the backdrop of the table cloth that's just perfect for a baptism. In the 1930s.

Okay, we admit that we're still going to be watching it every week—for it does have potential, the judges are pros in the industry, and they could give the girls the much needed edge after a few weeks of mentoring. We also attended the launch party of the show a couple of weeks back at Embassy Super club— choice pix appear on this page.

Maybe they could start taking the cue from the fiercely fab Joey Mead, who guested in the pilot episode. Commenting on the bland posing of the contestant named "Weng," Joey blurted out, "She needs a Weng-Weng."

We think they all do.


VINCE UY IN TOPHAN

TIM YAP IN PAOLO RAYMUNDO

ROBBIE CARMONA IN JOEY SAMSON

Mommy, smile! Say, Jollibee!

Sarap kasama si Jollibee pati si Yum Burger! Right, Atasha?

Sana everyday, may birthday party kami sa Jollibee! :)

DITO PINAKA-HAPPY ANG PARTY!

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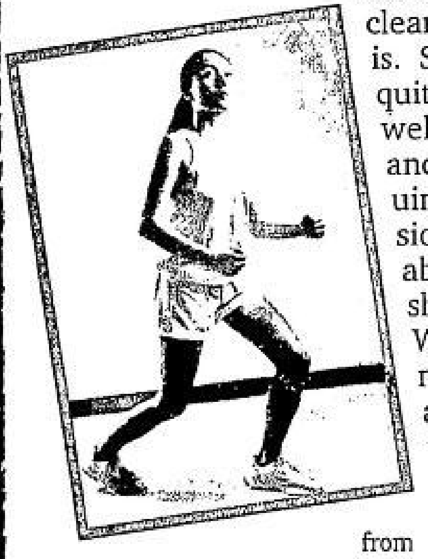
Text us your feedback: inquirer sup name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Oona! Dos! Tres!

By Gino de la Paz and Tals Diaz
Photo by Dix Perez

FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS ran the New York City Marathon, Oona Mapua must be, like, fit. Really fit. After spending a few minutes with her, it's abundantly clear that she is. She's also quite sharp, well-read, and genuinely passionate about what she does. Well, the million and one things she does.



Back from a two-year stint at NYC's Columbia University, Oona now has a graduate degree, with a focus on learning disabilities. "New York was fun, but I really missed my inquiring and critical-thinking students at Beacon International School," she shares. Now, though, she conducts individualized educational sessions for 20 superspecial students at her own home.

So what pumps up this brainy, fresh-faced model/athlete? She fessed that she's a huge McDreamy groupie, a fan of electronica, and is deep into this mathlete-friendly book called "Fermat's Last Theorem."

For Oona, life's marathons are just about to start.

And if there's anything we missed, let Oona tell you herself.

Oona Mapua

The thing about fame is that: It's fleeting

The thing I love most about what I do is: the high from running

People might be surprised to know that: I'm an educator of young children

The most important thing I've ever learned is that: one should not settle for mediocrity

I wish when I started off I've been told to: stay away from coffee

The secret to happines is: living your dream

The thing that makes me most angry is: when people are artificial!

If I was the most powerful person on earth: I would make people run to work instead use of transportation

The best thing about family is that: We communicate and love each other

The world would be a much better place if: we all accepted diversity

My hero is: Leonardo da Vinci and Albert Einstein

The thing that makes my life worth living is: Seeing my young students so excited about literacy

My greatest hope for the future is: for all children to experience quality education

My biggest indulgence is: buying books and school supplies

My current state of mind is: carpe diem

My five favorite words are? carpe diem, *kaya mo yan*!

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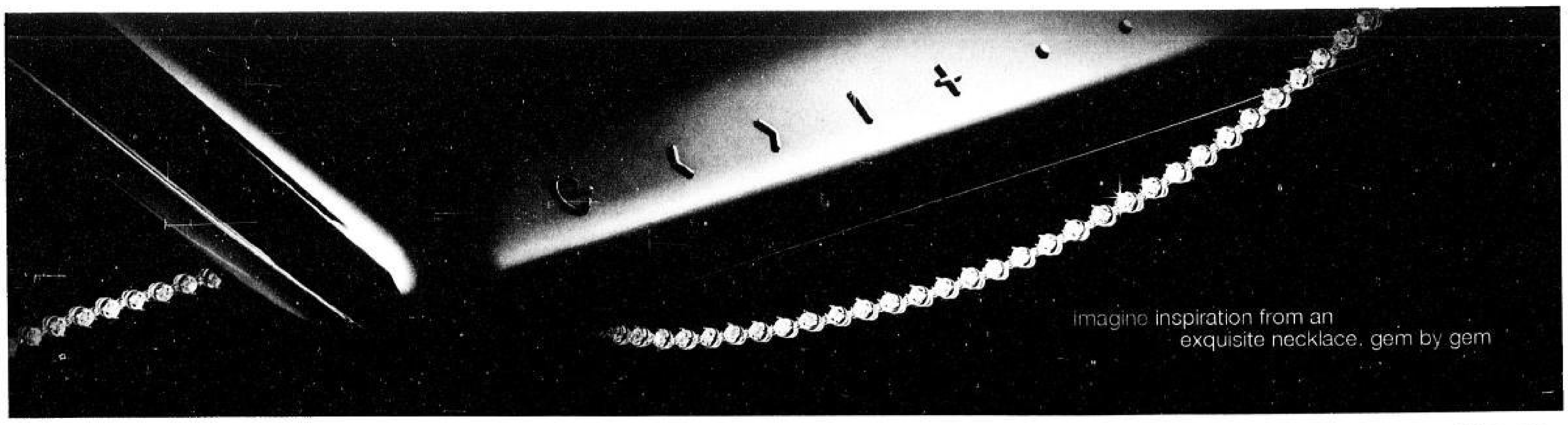
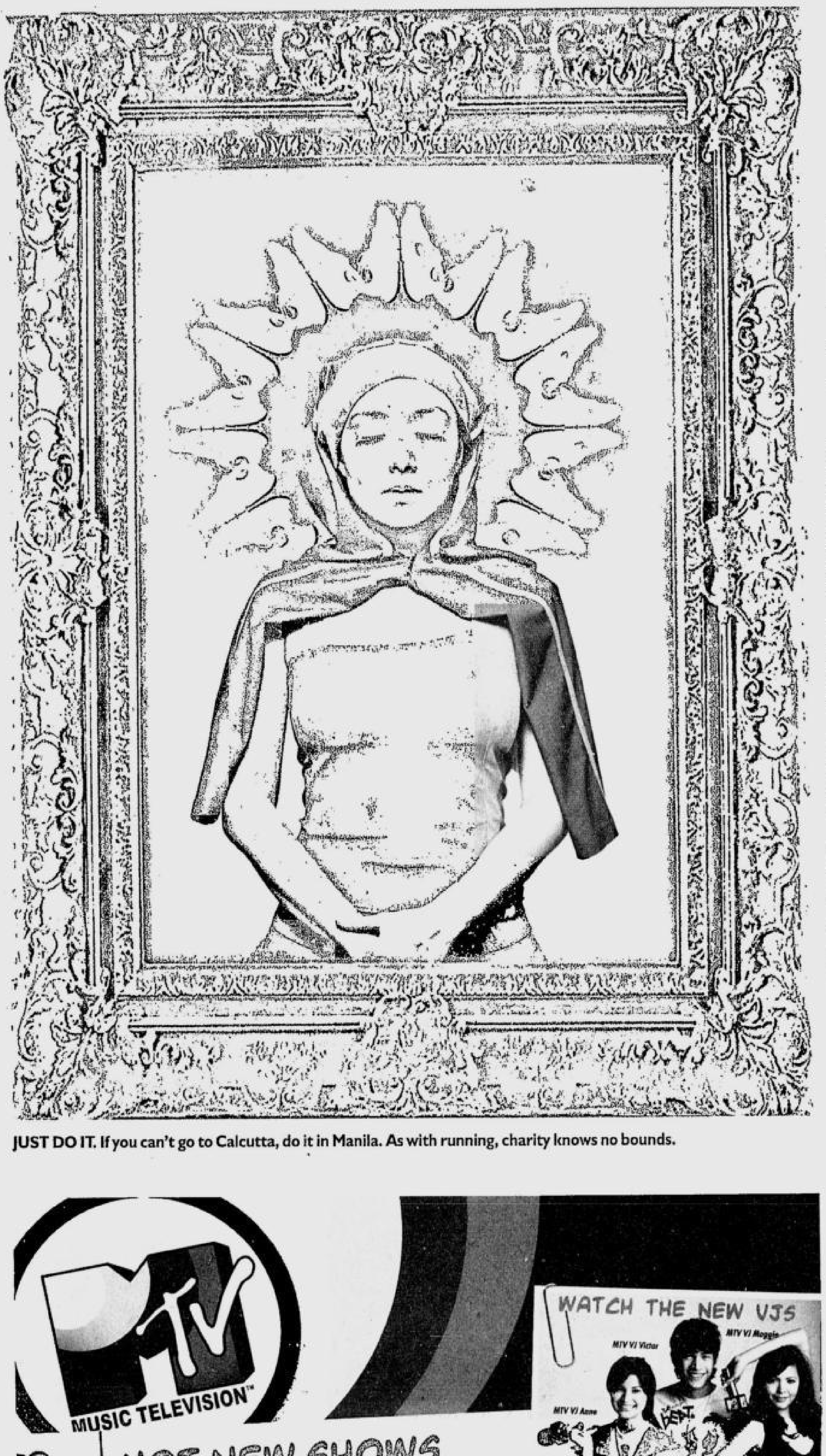


Discover it all soon.
SAMSUNG

When the saints go running in

Nike
with
whil
pave
ultin

By Juana Manahan



JUST DO IT. If you can't go to Calcutta, do it in Manila. As with running, charity knows no bounds.

RUNNING WAS SOMETHING that I always dreaded. As a child, the idea of pushing yourself to physical limits was just too scary. In high school, however, I fell in love with soccer—but I loved it more for the physical contact and for being able to spend the afternoon kicking balls than running around.

As I grew older, I found solace in running. One day last year, a friend asked me to go running with him. I was more concerned with what I was going to wear than being physically prepared, even if I hadn't run in a couple of years.

That afternoon, I realized how much I missed running and the freedom that it brings to one's mind. It is something that can be done anywhere, and can really drown out the busy thoughts in your head. Shoes, iPod and cute outfit in tow, I decided to keep running.

The more I got into it, the more I realized that there is a subculture of triathletes and runners with their own language and gadgets. People started asking me questions like "How many Ks did you do?" or "What was your pace?"

I had no clue what any of this meant, all I remembered was the pink Nike running outfit I had worn that day. On top of that, I was training for my first real running race and realized that I had to start counting kilometers and timing myself.

Not wanting to invest in a sports watch that calculates everything except fashion sense (frankly the watches didn't match all my running outfits), I asked my faithful driver, Tony, to follow me around one day and keep track of the number of kilometers I had run. My giant iPod, on the other hand, was big and bulky and kept getting in the way of picking up the pace. There has to be an easier way, I thought.

Power song

Enter the genius minds at Nike. Nike researchers have discovered a direct correlation with running and music. Music keeps one motivated while you are out there, alone, feet pounding on the pavement. They introduced the Nike+iPod, which is the ultimate solution to my running needs.

Nike+-ready shoes are identified with the trademark swoosh and a plus sign. The Nike sport kit comes with a chip that goes in a niche under the left shoe's insole. The chip counts the foot contact and bases your whole workout on this. A receiver is attached to your iPod Nano and receives all the information. Just like other Apple technology, the Nike+iPod is user-friendly and working it is a no-brainer. Operating the interface is as easy as using your regular iPod. After selecting what you will base your workout on (distance, time or calories), you are directed to begin your workout.

The Nike+ program has pre-measured distances for your workout. Choose from 3K to a full on marathon distance and the music will keep on playing. The iPod is designed to literally talk to the runner. By touching the center button during the duration of your workout, a voice will tell you exactly how far you have gone and the pace you are going at. An added bonus is the selection of a "power song." Nike researchers have proven that physical energy spikes when music that motivates you is played.

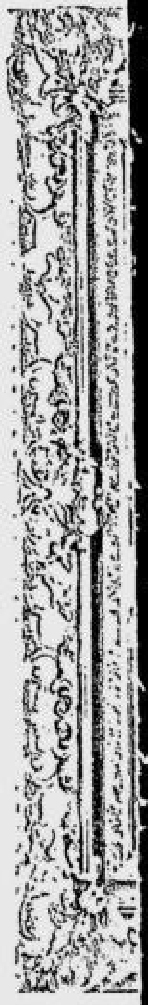
After working out, your information can be uploaded to Nikeplus.com.ph, a website designed especially for calculating and managing your workout. You can log workout data, view and evaluate personal training goals, review distance time, pace and calories burned. On top of this, it also opens you up to a whole community of runners around the world. You can contact friends who have a Nike+ and have challenges to find out who can run the farthest or the fastest.

Without a doubt, the Nike+iPod makes running more pleasant and hassle free. Most of all, the Nike+ will match almost everything you wear. Its sleek non-obtrusive design and reliability are sure to help keep running in fashion.

Special thanks to Nike, from my faithful driver Tony, who no longer has to follow me around as I run.

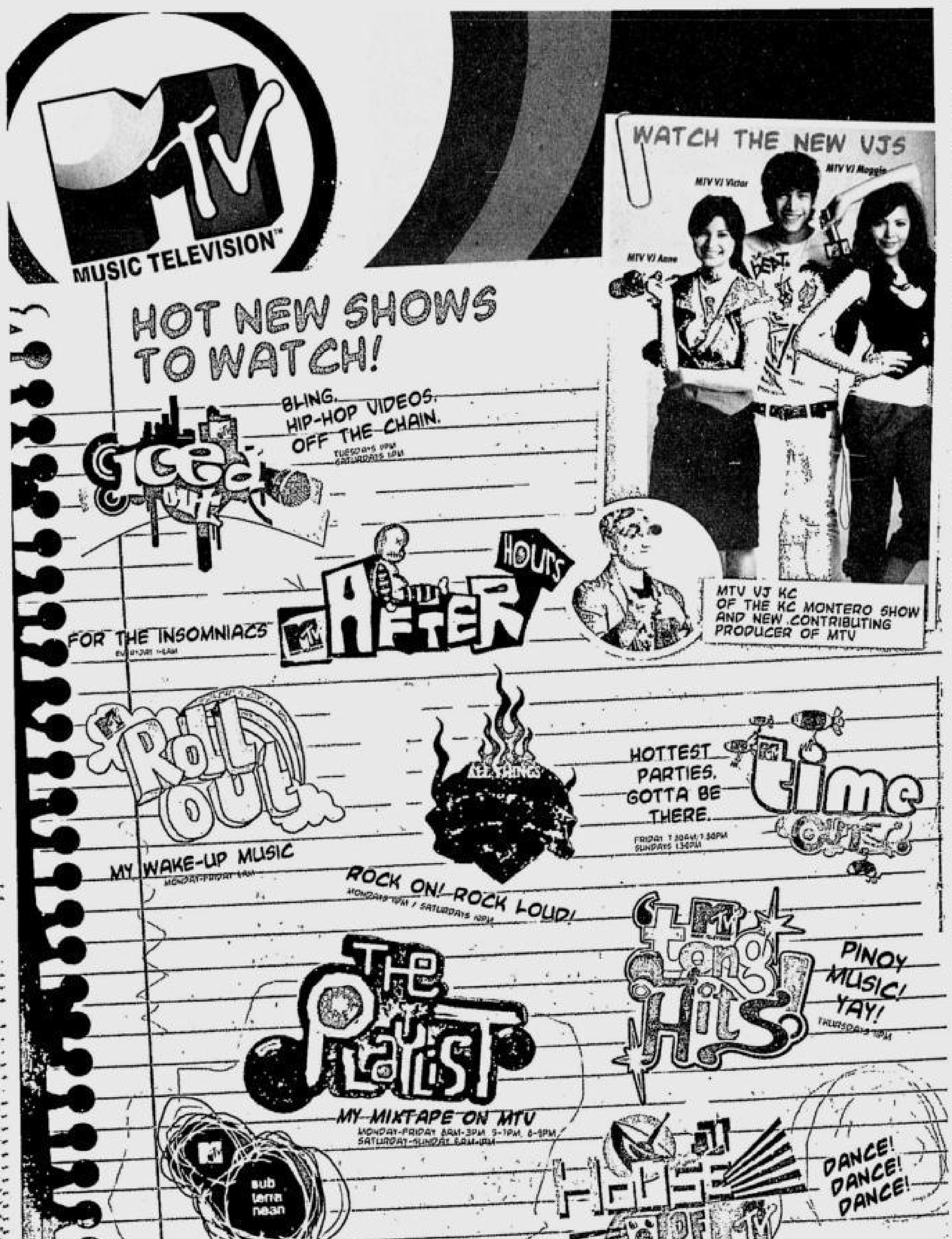
Produced by: TIM YAP
Photography: DIX PEREZ
Sittings Editor: DAVIDMILAN
Styling: JUANA MANAHAN
Makeup: JOHN PAGADUAN of Shu Uemura
All clothes by NIKE+iPod
Model: OONA MAPUA

On top of this, it also opens you up to a whole community of runners around the world



RUN FAST, GEAR UP. Nike shorts worn as veil and

I PRAY. iPOD. Nike tee worn as bandeau, arm band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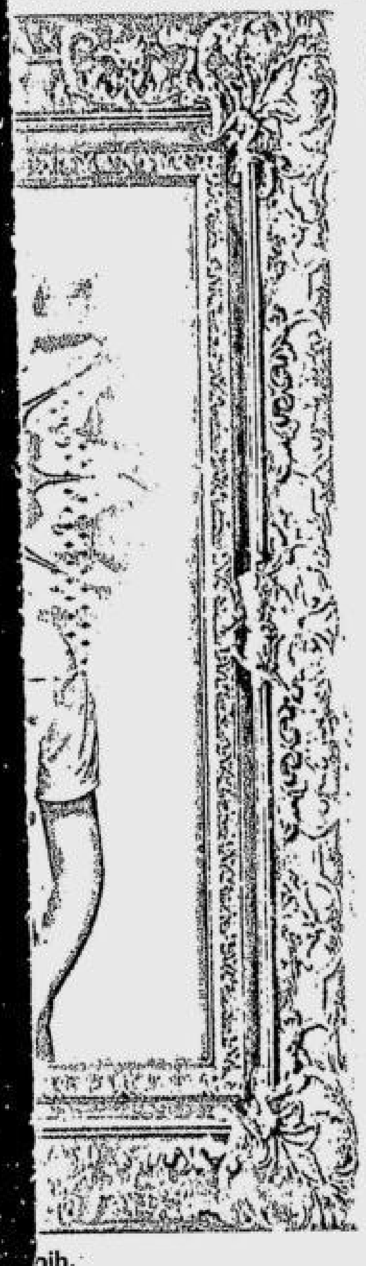
researchers have discovered a direct correlation running and music. Music keeps one motivated e you are out there, alone, feet pounding on the ment. They introduced the Nike+iPod, which is the nate solution to my running needs

ALL SAINT. Exercise your right to choose your music—while you run.



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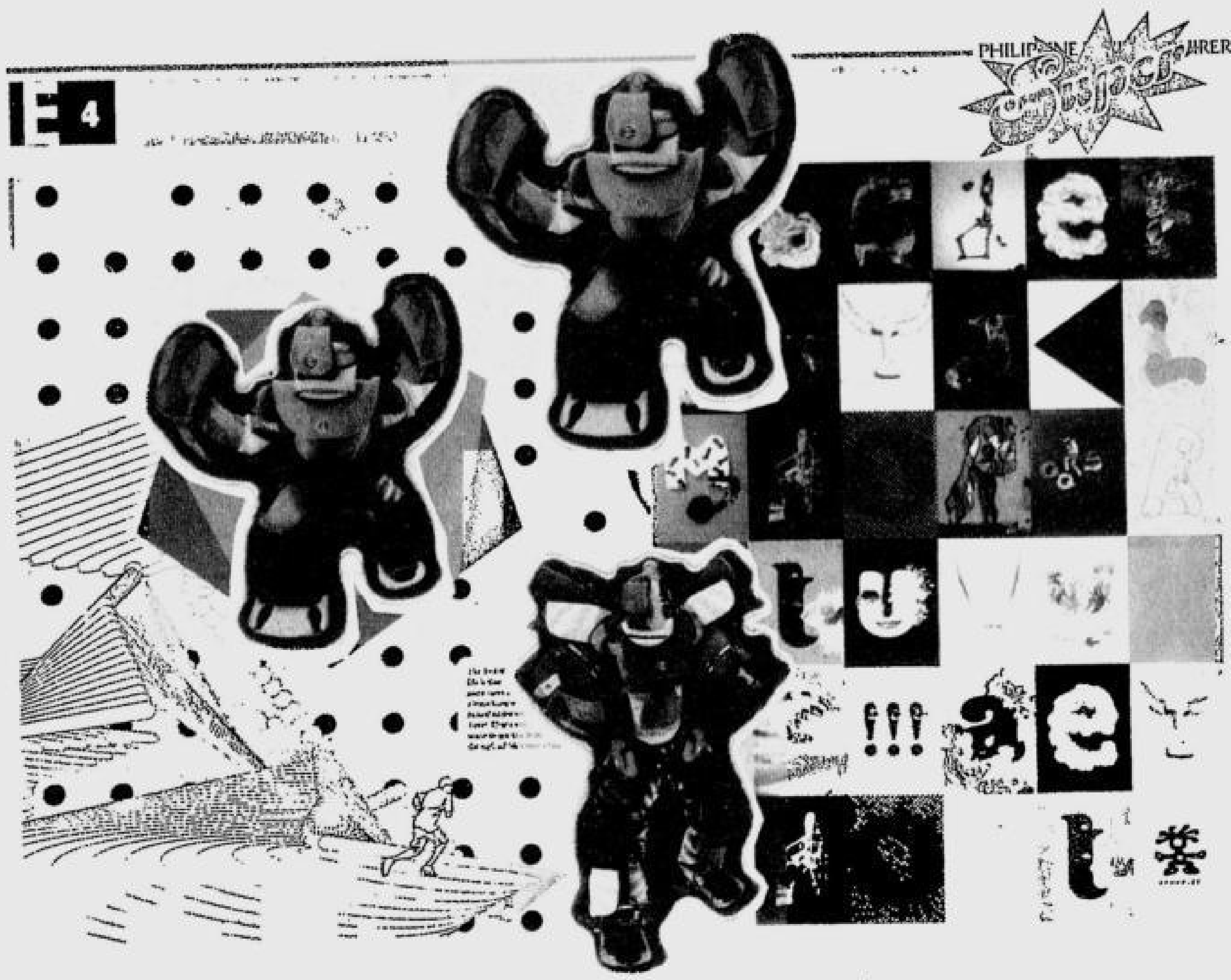
SUPER! SELECTIONS

Forget vegan, go Bagan!



Meet the greatest Australian import since Kidman, kangaroos and koalas

OUR HIP-O-METER IS GETting a strong signal, and it's coming from Down Under. And we don't mean hell. (Or Santa Rosa, Laguna.)

We're totally stoked about Crumpler bags, which we believe will be the next big craze among trend-watching urbanites. "Craze" is the right word—with Crumpler's loopy, irreverent marketing stunts to show off their ultra-sturdy, practical and visually appealing range of bags. Even the names are off-kilter—there's a laptop bag called "The Moderate Embarrassment," a tote called "Headaitch," "The Bees Knees" messenger bag, and the "Brazillion Dollar Home" which is a photo/laptop backpack that converts into a shoulder bag. Ah, gotta love these Aussies, mate!

A little history lesson—it all started back in 1991 when William Miller and David Roper ran Minuteman Messengers, a small bicycle courier company based in Melbourne. Two years later, Stuart Crumpler joined the company as a courier. The trio realized there was a need for durable and practical messenger bags, as opposed to the generic black ones used at that time. So they started designing bags out of canvas which had everything a courier needed. Soon, their bags started grabbing attention and Crumpler was formed.

There's a whole range of cool messenger bags, totes, laptop bags, backpacks and even iPod cases to choose from, all sturdy and waterproof. The secret of their strength is the Dupont Cordura Plus, a nylon fabric that is quick-drying and lightweight. Bag straps are made of industrial seat belt webbing, strong enough to lift a car. Add big buckles and zips, and a whole lot of hip—you've got a new lust-have in your wardrobe.

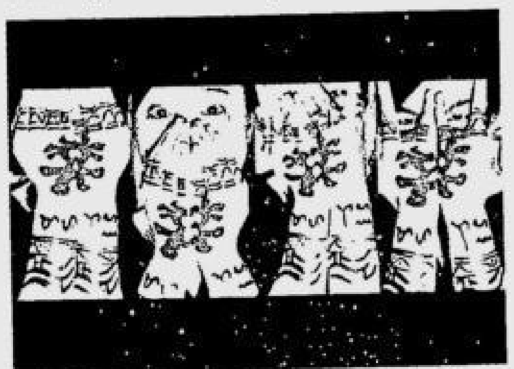
True to its notoriously zany form, Crumpler officially launched its store in Bonifacio High street in a hypercolorful way. Their main mascot, a tangerine-haired and moustached quirk called Pineapple Juju, crashed the party—literally—when his bicycle slipped near the stage. (All part of the show, mates!)

Kaleidoscopic dancers strapped on Crumpler bags while zipping to the drumbeats of Bacolod-based Grupo Tribale and DJ Elmer. Guests were dared to come onstage to impersonate Paris Hilton or The Godfather, or let out their craziest, most maniacal laughter. The crowd happily chewed on Brothers Burger and NY Fries n Dip, while the Planet Zips fire dancers heated up the finale.

So look out for the dancing dreadlocked dude, which we predict to be the soon-to-be ubiquitous logo. Grab a Crumpler, mate! This is gonna be big.

Crumpler is located at Bonifacio High Street Serendra, for inquiries call 856-2019.

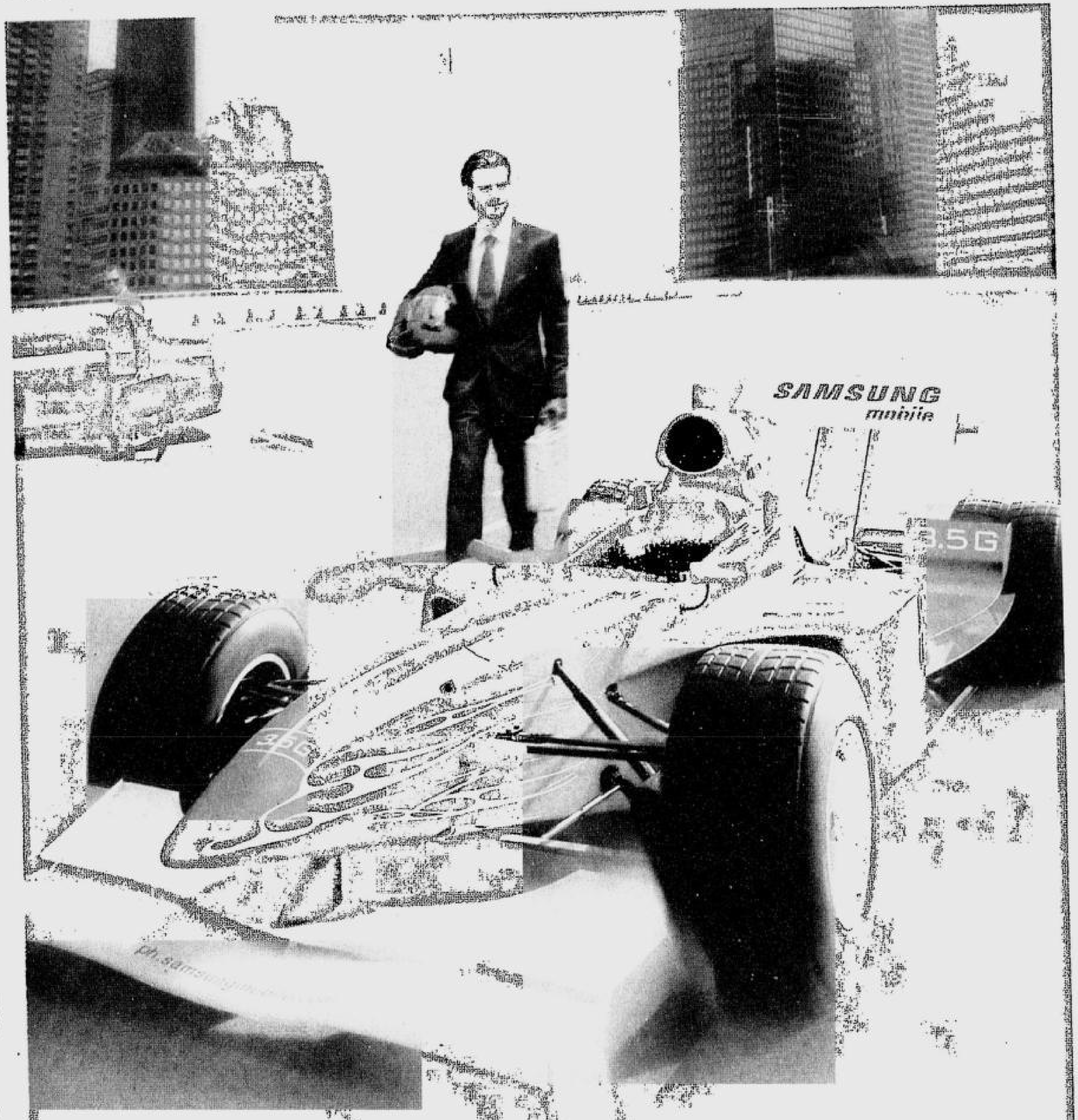
THAT'S THE WAY THE KOOKY CRUMPLES: Winning photos of Crumpler contest:



CRUMPLER winning entry by Arabella Micu

WINNING entry of Tammy David entitled "Crumpled Dog"

WINNING entry by Vicoyski-Al, "Homework"



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style . urban living . pop culture . entertainment . recreation

RAGING CATHOHOLIC. Mel Gibson, busy offending Mayans after offending Jews.

IT'S NOT REAL, REALLY. But you see why Iran wants to declare war on Sparta, right?

Critical mess

Mayans are pissed off at 'Apocalypto.' Iran flips out because of '300.' Kazakhs still sort of hate 'Borat.' These complaints are, like, really getting out of hand

Age against the machine

Gino de la Paz

RINGING LOUDER THAN HIS last Jews-and-"Sugartits" PR debacle, Mel Gibson has freaked out again, this time at Cal State Northridge. When an assistant professor of Central American studies prodded him about his apparently "racist" take on Mayan culture in "Apocalypto," the raging Cathoholic barked, "Lady, f*ck off."

Not stoked about the love he didn't get, he went on to shout, "Make your own movie!" at several Mayan representatives as they were being escorted out of the auditorium. It's either Mel Gibson's anger management classes haven't been effective, or he merely watched the Adam Sandler movie of the same name. Hmmm.

Whiny, whine, whine

Granted, some levelheaded ones feel that Mel Gibson's so-so torture-porno, "Apocalypto," was pretty off in its depiction of Mayan culture and their party-hearty human-sacrificing ways. In fact, they say that such carelessness adds to the ignorant stereotyping of Native peoples.

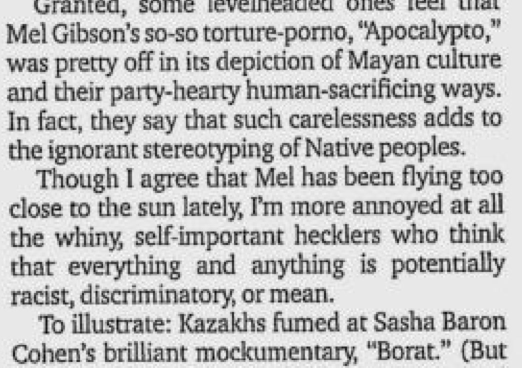
Though I agree that Mel has been flying too close to the sun lately, I'm more annoyed at all the whiny, self-important hecklers who think that everything and anything is potentially racist, discriminatory, or mean.

To illustrate: Kazakhs fumed at Sasha Baron Cohen's brilliant mockumentary, "Borat." (But before the movie, no one really gave a turd about Kazakhstan.) Sierra Leone feared that the Leonardo diCaprio vehicle, "Blood Diamond," will prompt buyers to look for gems elsewhere. (The movie flopped so it's okay to ice the wrist again. Woot.) Greek lawyers were outraged at Oliver Stone's "Alexander," since it hinted that Greece's ancient ruler liked cruising for boys. (That epic bombed as well.) The Opus Dei viewed "The Da Vinci Code" as a personal attack on their organization. (It was more like a litmus test, and they flunked it.) Jeez, what a bunch of babies.

Primo psychodrama

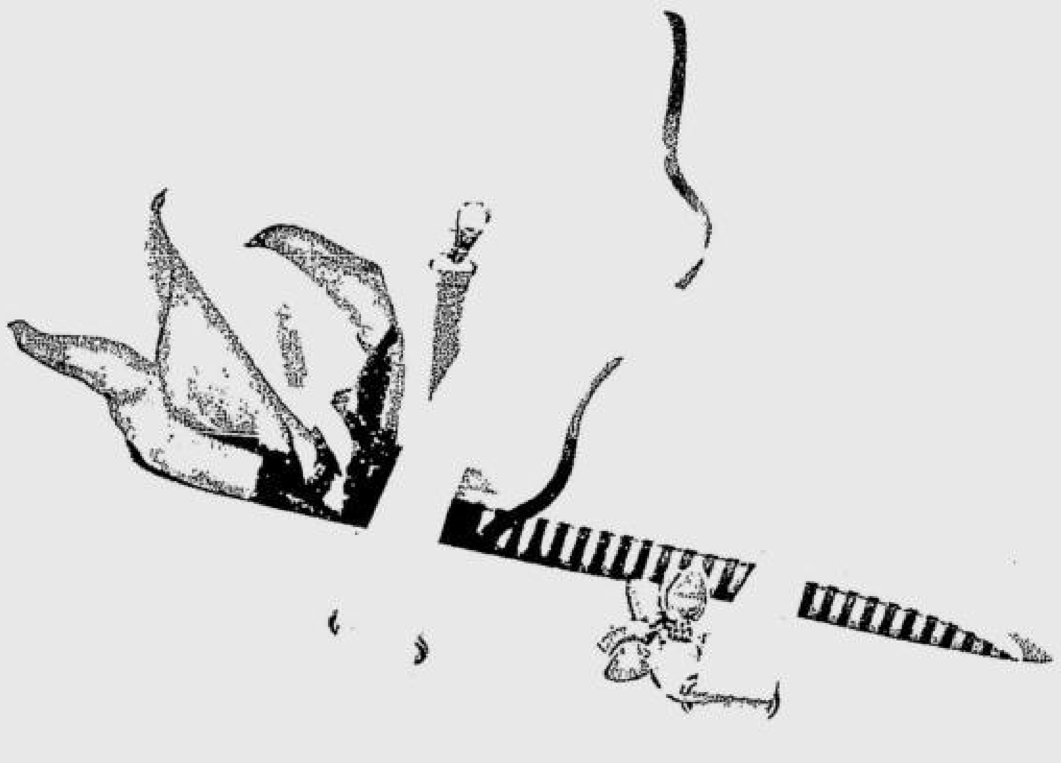
The sudden abundance of sensitivity, however absurd, has generated primo psychodrama

CRITICAL/ F2



VERY NICE! Before Borat, no one cared about Kazakhstan.

LACOSTE



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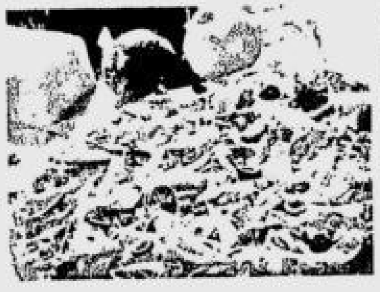
SUPER [yummy] SELECTIONS!

Happy Di'Mark's Pizza!

WITH ALL THE ASSEMBLY-LINE PIZZA CHAINS OUT THERE, THERE is one pizza place that remains a favorite of generations—Di'Mark's Pizza! Even just saying it makes your mouth water, with their 'tastic, tasty original classic recipes like the Mad Scramble, Menlo and Taco pizzas. The pizza pioneer in the Philippines is celebrating their 50th year anniversary of breaking through the taste barriers by serving up fantastic pizza as well as world-class, original Italian and Filipino fare.



So what better way to celebrate then than to treat everyone to a half-off? Yep, Di'Mark's is taking 50% off on all their pizzas this Sunday, April 1, 2007. Celebrate fifty years with them at their branches at Greenbelt, Tomas Morato, Wack Wack Road Mandaluyong, Royale Place Mall, Commonwealth and Malate branches.

TACO-mata! Feast on Di'Mark's famous taco pizza

Young society snaps

NEW WORK ON PHILIPpine Society" was unveiled two days ago at Fiamma. "I never followed any book on how to compose or take a picture," says Rupert Jacinto, international portrait photographer of society men and women in the Philippines.

In 1978, Rupert was invited to do his first exhibit called 15 Women at the Hotel Intercontinental Manila where he photographed 15 high society Filipino women including Chito Madrigal-Collantes and Imelda Cojuangco. The show was written as the "biggest show this side of the world" by the local and foreign press. This led to a yearly exhibit at the Peninsula Manila and international exhibits in New York, San Francisco, Palm Beach and Paris.

Formal portraits became Jacinto's forte and his subject became regular clients. These have included international society figures Deeda Blair, Virginia Vanderbilt Burke, Monica Greenberg, Ivana Trump, Kimberly Rockefeller, Jennifer Gucci, Nina Griscom and the Countess Camille Chandon plus local bigwigs Imelda Marcos and President Gloria Arroyo. "The biggest compliment for a photographer is to see his work on display at the subject's home," relates Jacinto, which is one of the reasons he got drawn to formal portraits. His goal for every formal portrait is to capture the moment and bring out the inner glow in every person.

Rupert unveiled 15 young, high society portraits in an exhibit called "New Work on Philippine Society." The portrait subjects include Roseann Prieto, China Cojuangco, Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Leica Rufino Carpo, Mia Borromeo, Celine Lopez, Hindy Weber-Tantoco, Mandy dela Rama-Santos, Natalia Jacinto, Alessandra Poblador, Serena Madrigal-Gelb, Nina Huang, Marco Antonio, James Chiongbian and Paolo Trillo, among others. Exhibit is sponsored by Bombay Sapphire and runs till April 2.

Ready, set, animate

YOU CAN TURN YOUR IMAGInation into animation.

Animax has launched its debut pan-Asia scriptwriting competition, Animax Awards, for both amateurs and established artists to showcase their work and break out on the international stage.

Animax Awards has been staged in Japan for five consecutive years since 2002, and has become a prestigious competition where the grand prize is coveted by many in the industry. For the very first time, Animax Awards is expanding its scope across Asia to call for talents to the animation industry.

Animax Awards is now open to applicants from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, India, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Top entries will enter the Finals and the grand prize winner will have his or her entry developed into an original production by a top Japanese animation studio.

Now keen animators have the chance to tell the stories they have been waiting to share with the world. Going on the theme, "A Story I Wish to be Animated," contestants are free to create scripts that may be in script, novel or comic format for a 30-minute short film. They also have the option of incorporating original characters created by Animax into the scripts to form unique and creative works of art.

The winner of this year's Animax Awards will not only take home JP¥ 2 million (approximately US$18,000), but will bag the golden opportunity to have his or her winning entry developed into an original production by leading Japanese animation studio, A-1 Pictures of Aniplex (famous work like Full Metal Alchemist) and broadcast Asia-wide on the Animax network. Finalists from each region will also be awarded with US$2,000 prize money.

Representing the Philippines as judges are three well-known innovators in their field—Quark Henares, film director at the forefront of the new Filipino cinema scene and famous for his 2006 fantasy flick Super Noypi; Grace Dimaranan, the President of the Philippines Animation Council; and Lenil Francis Yu, a Filipino comic artist who has worked on famous Marvel comic titles like Wolverine, X-Men and Fantastic Four.

Contestants may submit their original script for a 30-minute short film until May 31, 2007. Visit www.animaxawards.com.

Put your hands together for Marc Ecko, who's bringing the power of the punk-ass rhino to a sneaker near you

Sneakergasm

By Gino de la Paz

URBAN ROYALTY. Marc Ecko reps diversification.

HIS BUSINESS PORTFOLIO reps the power of diversification. In just 12-plus years, 33-year-old Marc Ecko has built an enviable, full-scale lifestyle and fashion company with a compass trained squarely at the global youth market. From *ecko unltd. and Marc Ecko "Cut & Sew" to Zoo York and G-Unit Clothing Company, all part of Marc Ecko Enterprises, the man with the plan seems to have pop-locked his way into Ralph Lauren territory. Both designer and street, his punk-ass rhino has become the hip-hop antithesis to the enduring god of Americana's WASPy polo player.

But aside from doling out mellow-fellow essentials to the urban nation, Marc Ecko has also been making a serious push in the publishing world. As founder of Complex magazine, a bi-monthly bible that feeds those with addictions to premium sneakers, jeans, gadgets, and whatnot, he has further solidified his role as a pop culture navigator. As if that weren't enough, Marc Ecko has also launched Marc Ecko's Getting Up: Contents Under Pressure, a video game developed with Atari that acts as an homage to graffiti's rich culture.

It's impossible to have too much awesome stuff, right? (It's like porn!) But on the flipside, Marc Ecko has paid it forward by setting up mentoring programs for underserved New York City teens and funding the Tikva Children's Home, an orphanage in the Ukraine. On the environmental front, he has dedicated himself to reversing the plight of the world's rhino population. After all, the beast is his cool-guy empire's official lucky charm.

From six T-shirts and a can of spray paint in 1993 to retail sales of roughly $1 billion as we speak, it's crystal that Marc Ecko, the graffiti artist-slash-multimedia mogul, is a player to watch in our fight to disrupt the status quo. Booyah achieved? Let me hear you say yeah.

*Now you can lace yourself up Ecko style. *ecko unltd. footwear is available at SM Department Stores, Toby's, Olympic Village, and Royal Sporting House.*

Critical mess

From page F1

in blogland and beyond. Jumping from the always-marinated Mel Gibson, the hoopla has also surrounded Iran, whose leader, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is a Holocaust denier.

Who would've thought that a film inspired by a graphic novel inspired by a battle that may have occurred between the Persian empire and a Greek army would be enough to get an entire Islamic country's granny panties in a bunch? Iran's UN Mission has recently condemned blockbuster flick "300" for its portrayal of Persians as ruthless, dumb-as-rocks imperialists. According to them, the movie's "deliberate distortions" were part of the West's efforts to "demonize" Iran.

Iranian film directors have also gone stab-happy, pointing to the movie's historical inaccuracies. Why is Iran being such a drama queen? "300" never sold itself as a History Channel documentary of, like, what actually went down at Thermopylae in 480 B.C. It's a movie—I repeat, a movie—based on a comic book and shot against a blue screen. It's meant to be fake! And it's as if Iranians will ever get to see "300" on the big screen anyway. Last I checked, Western films were banned in Iran. Duh.

Fire, brimstone, Persian kebabs

Iran's nutjob reaction, meanwhile, has generated its own satirical skewering—pun intended—online. In a web-exclusive spoof by Newsweek's Andy Borowitz, President Ahmadinejad has apparently directed his most barbed comments at the film's codpiece-rocking Spartans.

"We have been building a nuclear reactor for peaceful purposes only, but now we plan to drop that peaceful reactor on top of those damned Spartans," Ahmadinejad said at a make-believe press conference in Tehran. Borowitz writes that the move struck many diplomatic insiders as extraordinary, since the consensus in the international community is that—how do I put this delicately—the city-state of Sparta no longer exists.

Pick a card, any card

It's a given that movies which draw upon history or get inspiration from long-gone cultures or events are rarely 100% accurate. Film producers, writers and directors are known to stylize and even exaggerate facts, turning them into idealized and hopefully watchable vignettes. In this case, the finished product becomes more about the interpretation of a subject than the subject itself. The overanalysis and woe-is-me crap, therefore, is totally uncalled for. It's really getting out of hand.

For Details writer Simon Dumenco, our elastic generosity of spirit has been abused one too many times by those "self-pitying, blame-shifting bitches." And it's time for the pity party to stop.

In his article, "Watch Out—Here Comes the Minority Card," published in October 2006, Dumenco states that these days, it has become customary to pull a card—The Race Card, the Gender Card, the Addiction Card, the Gay Card, the Bad-Childhood Card—to draw empathy from people. By doing so, those players want to convey that had they not been dealt this "unfortunate card"—though no fault of their own—their negative experiences would never have happened.

Own up and grow up

"Can't anyone just swallow hard and own up—just take the blame, the whole blame, and nothing but the blame?" he asks. Dumenco seems to dare everyone to finally own up and grow up. Really, it's about time. After all, only weak people play the Sympathy Card. Stay away from them. They're black holes.

Apart from the blame game, however, political correctness is also a huge part of the problem. Until powerful but loopy types start teaching Persian, Mayan, or Kazakh history, PC asshats should stop ragging.

While we do live in less forgiving times, where a tiny slip of the tongue can get you labeled as a big intolerant boob, it's time for people to stop fake-walking on eggshells. A form of censorship, political correctness is the worst thing to ever happen to free speech.

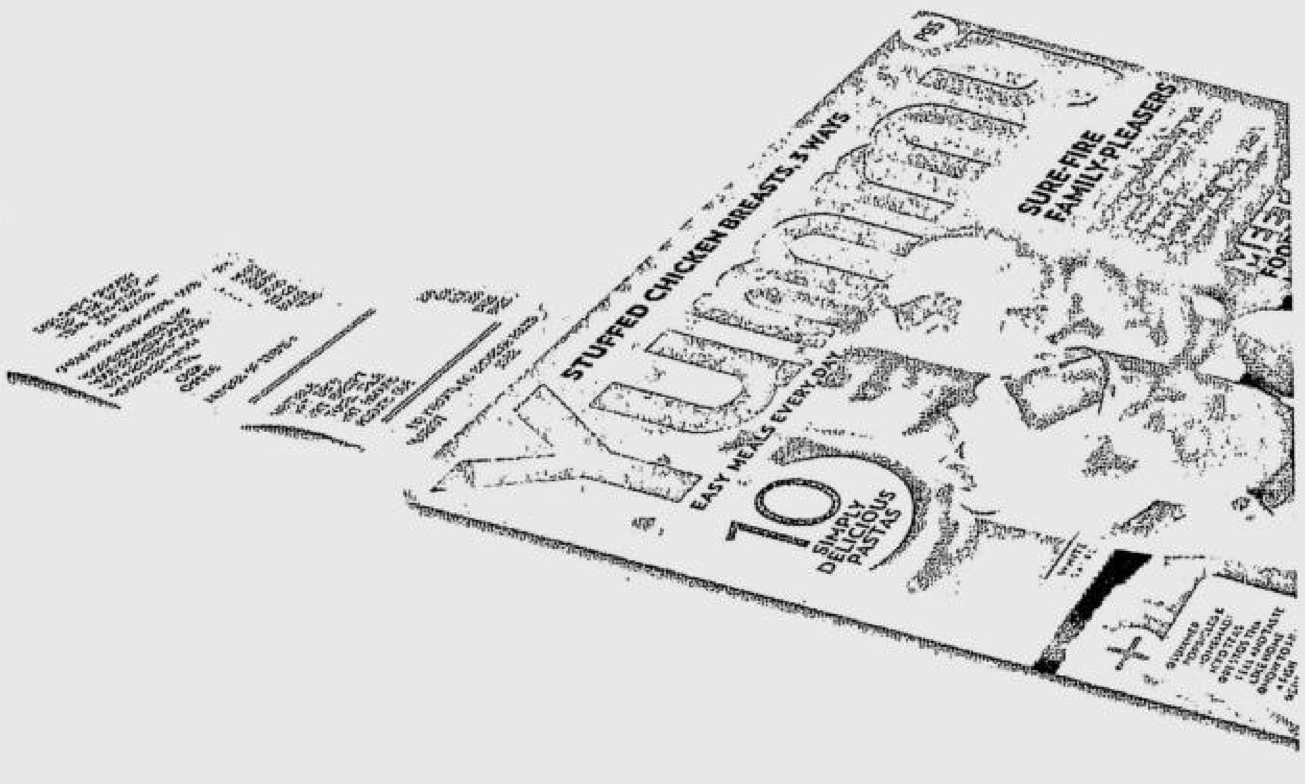
It's entertainment, not a true story

But going back to Hollywood-style fiction, it seems that everyone is like a defensive 10-year-old now—taking every film they see as bible truth and in some cases, a display of bigotry. Whatever happened to the suspension of disbelief? Or watching a movie for the sake of entertainment?

There are a couple things hypersensitive pop culture complainers should remember. One, unless a film is marketed as a true story, it's not. Screw hermeneutics, check the historical geekery at the door, and don't take it too personally. Two, pulling the race card—or whatever sob story—does not work anymore. It can, in fact, provoke a backlash where there was no hatred to begin with. It's way offensive to appeal to a person's emotions since one should always aim for someone's intellect.

Last, drunk men say what sober people only think. I heart Mel Gibson's now-classic "Lady, f*ck off." It's a succinct, nonhypocritical response to harebrained, melodramatic objections. That said, it's time for hypercritical people to chill. I mean, please. It's only a movie.

Make delicious meals with ingredients from your local supermarket.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Marlboro
HOSTS THE PARTY OF PARTIES

Manila escapes the routine placid party scene with MARLBORO's groundbreaking M party. Truly an earth-shaking shift of global proportions, this night set a new standard for all other parties.

MARLBORO, the no. 1 cigarette brand in the world, celebrated a night of great music, flowing drinks and an energy-filled crowd. Managing Director Chris Nelson stated "The M Party was filled with energy and unique twists as befits the spirit of MARLBORO."

Setting the upbeat mixes and dynamic beats for the hip M party were the Grammy-award winning duo of Deep Dish [Dubfire + Sharam]. Indeed, it was an extraordinary experience to see them playing together. And this is just one of the reasons why MARLBORO's M party may be a once-in-a-lifetime thing.

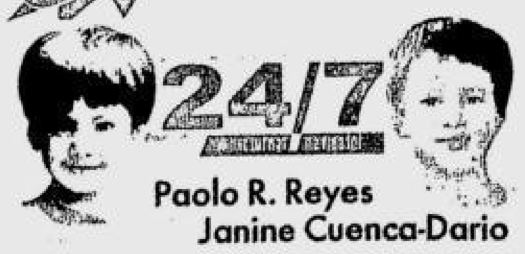
Even before Deep Dish hit the turntables, the place was already packed with Manila's elite, a mix of individuals who were seen enjoying the music and vibe. Celebrities and known personalities had their fill of great music and overflowing drinks and cocktails. Amidst the pack of partygoers were the movers and shakers behind the brand led by Marlboro Marketing Director Roy Manalili and MARLBORO Brand Manager Eric Carandang.

Another highlight was the opening by local talent Kevin Ruiz. To add to the party's well-crafted stylistics, professional floating dancers set the mood for non-stop dancing.

Undeniably, the MARLBORO M Party was an event of incendiary beats as Manila's finest flocked to the party and danced the night away. Though the same sun will set and the same moon will rise over Manila's partyscape, MARLBORO's M Party ensured that the night scene will never be the same again!

Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health

Warehouse high



Paolo R. Reyes
Janine Cuenca-Dario

THEY CALL IT THE CLUB WITH NO name, and it doesn't need a neon-colored sign to make itself known. As you drive along dimly-lit Yakal Street in Makati, it's hard to miss a modern, industrial structure whose only identifying feature is a fleet of parked cars and a long line of partygoers outside its door.

Over the past year, events promoter Driven Manila transformed a 20-year-old, 600-sqm warehouse into a dance club of world-class standards: Warehouse 135. When it finally opened its doors last February 2, a steady influx of foreign DJs soon followed, including the likes of Shunju Moriwaki, Lee Burridge, Lisa Loud, and Andy Caldwell.

Tonight at 10 p.m., Warehouse 135 treats the city's after-hours scene to a sexy dose of driving house beats. Talented local spinmeisters Jakey Yulo, NBK's Bombi Balquiedra, and Ali Nepomuceno will headline this weekend's Blow by Blow Saturday. "Expect a fun-filled night of funky, groovy house tunes," says Yulo. Door charge is at P300. Visit www.drivenmanila.com.

The club with no name doesn't need a neon sign to make itself known

Heart for Hannah @ Wasabi

Hannah has a hole in her heart, and she needs your help. Tonight at 7 p.m., a dinner and silent auction will be held at Wasabi Hawker [Olympia Bldg., 7912 Makati Ave. cor. Santo Tomas St., Makati, phone: 840-4223] for the benefit of Hannah Antonio, a 2-month-old baby with a congenital heart defect, who will undergo surgery soon. Music will be provided by DJs Benjo Marquez and Chip de la Calzada. Tickets are priced at P500, inclusive of the set dinner. Call 0917-8350615 or 0922-7288606.

More Super! 24/7 events:

Mar. 31, Saturday

Blow by Blow Saturday feat. DJs Jakey Yulo & Bombi Balquiedra at Warehouse 135, 135 Yakal St., Makati; Heart for Hannah: Dinner + Auction at Wasabi Hawker Bisto; Peacepipe, Collieherb, Badfish, TeroriSKA & Syalam at Stir Crazy Bar, Ortigas; Francis M, Itchyworms, Bagetsafonik, Ill-J, 2tay, Monique Killer Hip-Hop Band & Wolfmann at Saguijo; DJs Karl Ty & Marie Garcia at Fiamma; Dance Night at Mag:net Café; Latin House at Mezze; Soundsgood DJs at Embassy Cuisine; Rouge at M Café; DJs Jon Herrera & Tolo Bote at Temple; Sleepless w/ DJ Martin Pulgar at Embassy Club; Campusition at Mag:net Café ; DJs Scratchmark & Bliss at Prince of Jaipur; Dragon Saturdays at Bed; Renegade Assault: Extreme Stand-up Comedy with Mike Unson at Conspiracy

April 1, Sunday

Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Greenbelt; Chinese Diaspora exhibit at Ayala Museum; Sunday Brunch Affair w/ Concertino at Azzurro Linden Suites; Jazz Sunday Brunch at M Café

April 2, Monday

Rivermaya at Edsa Shangri-La; Embassy Anniversary Party at Embassy Club; Happy Mondays hosted by Borgy Manotoc at Embassy Cuisine; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; I Don't Like Mondays! w/ DJ RO at Gweilos Makati; Chemical Underground at Absinth; Retro Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites; Tabaco: Jose Enrique Soriano at Silverlens Gallery

April 3 , Tuesday

Nyko Maca + Playground at Capone's; The Bloomfields at Strumm's ; Lounge Night w/ Zenaida Celdran at Mezze; Cuisine Royale w/ DJ Manolet Dario at Embassy Cuisine; 80s & 90s Night w/ DJ Jeff at Temple; Sparkle w/ DJ Patch at Absinth; Guarana at Café Havana Greenbelt; Open Mic Night at Club O; Piano Nights at Azzurro Linden Suites; Shamrock at Metro Bar

April 4, Wednesday

DJ Marie Garcia at Rock Candy (formerly Citrus); W Wednesdays w/ DJs Karl Ty & Cao Ocampo at Embassy Cuisine; Lush: Smooth Rn'B at Fiamma; Keep on Dancing w/ DJ Boyet Almazan at Mezze; The Bloomfields at Eastwood City; DJs Mars Miranda & Johnyverse at Embassy Club; Dejavu 90s Night w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Live Rock Bands at Temple; Willy Wanka's Music Factory at Gweilos Makati; DJs Kimozave & Chrismyx at Prince of Jaipur; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt

April 5, Thursday

Studio 23's Beach House 2007 w/ DJ Paul Christian at Cocomangas (Boracay); Jazz Night w/ Nyko Maca + Playground at Saguijo; Brown Suggah Soul w/ Jermaine Brown at M Café; La Luna Loca w/ Tribo Manila at Mezze; Fluxxe: Whatever Thursdays at Absinth; Chocolate Buffet Night at Paseo Uno; Soundsgood DJs at Nuvo; SPIT at Mag:net Café; Reggae Mistress at Café Havana Greenbelt; Backtrack Thursdays w/ Brothers & Millenium at Club O; Radio Coquina at Coquina; World's Fastest Open Bar at Bed

April 6, Friday

Studio 23's Beach House 2007 w/ Nostalgia 77 at Cocomangas (Boracay); Sala Ibiza w/ DJ Karl Ty at Nuvo; Latin Connection at Piedra; Decadance w/ Boyet Almazan at Jill's; DJ Tony Pavia at Mezze; House Sessions at Fiamma; House@Home w/ DJ David Ardiente at Coquina; Karen Manion & Blu Room at Martinis Bar; MyHOUSE at M Café; MILF: Mom I Love Fridays! at Absinth; Soul Shine at Embassy Cuisine; Jive w/ DJs Darrel & McDash at Temple; Arriba at Café Havana Greenbelt; The Jerks at 70s Bistro; DJs Scratchmark & Bcal at Prince of Jaipur; Nuevo Ritmo at Café Havana Malate

Schedules may change without prior notice. For more information and a complete listing of events, text 24/7 GIGS through your mobile phone and send to 2851 (Globe) and 2951 (Smart). Log on to mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at bars and restaurants around the city. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com , mag24_7@yahoo.com, and NocturnalNavigator@gmail.com.

The real big brother

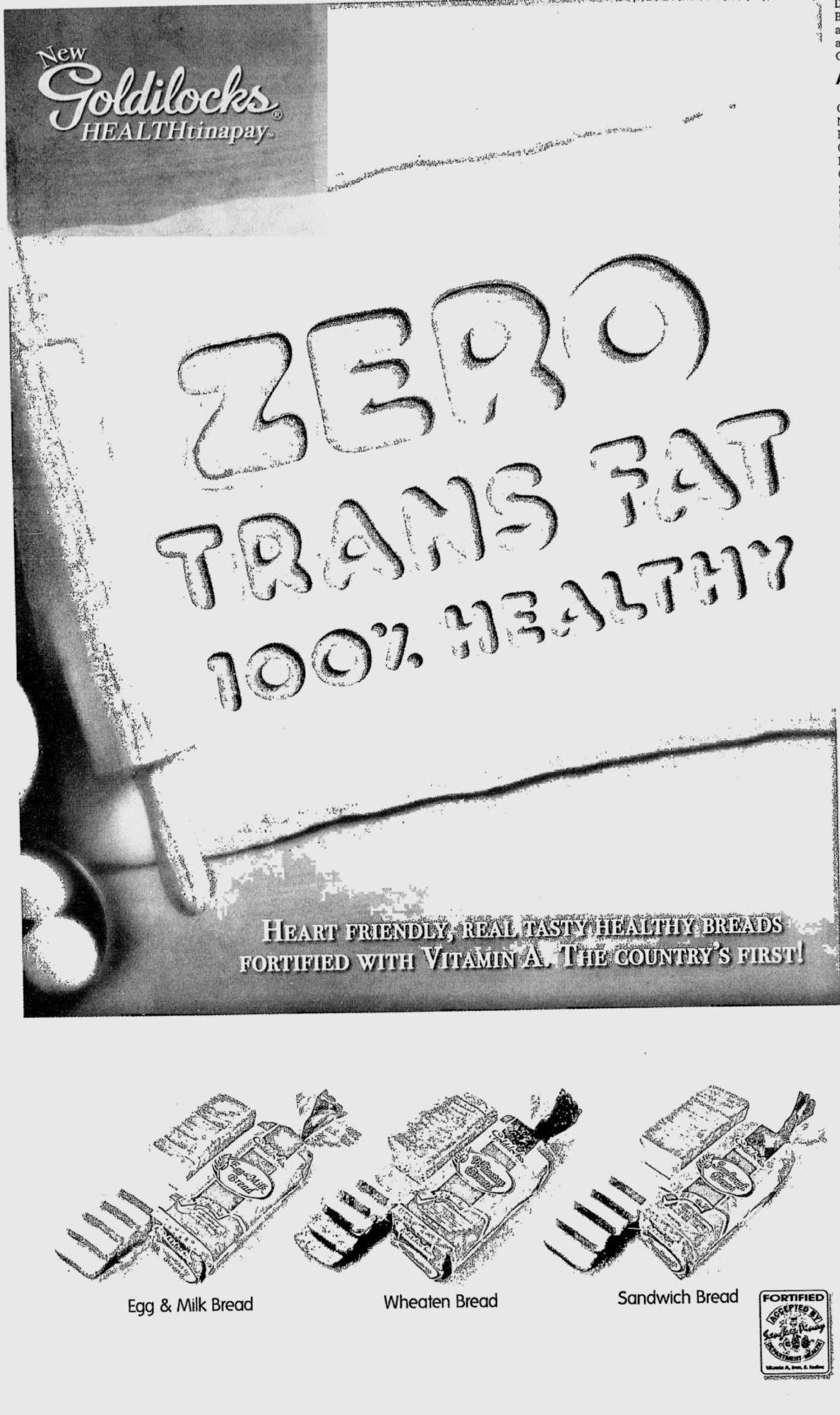
JUST CALL IT HOLY TV.

Instead of completely going off the air on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Black Saturday, ABC-5 promises to pack the days with unique programs to help viewers keep the week holy. Don't think of it as TV, the network people say, think of it as "a three-day spiritual journey that promises to be inspiring and enlightening."

ABC-5 has partnered with the Jesuit Communications Foundation Inc. (Jescom) for this special Lenten offering. It's a three-day holy retreat on your boob tube—and includes live liturgical services, short films, documentaries, musicals, music videos and testimonials. "Spiritual Journey" follows eight young adults—four girls and four boys from different backgrounds and with diverse interests. They leave the outside world and are brought together for a three-day retreat at the Sacred Heart Novitiate in Novaliches, Quezon City. The novitiate is a 74-year-old Jesuit facility secluded by ancient trees on rolling hills spread over a hundred hectares.

Watch the eight live, pray, reflect, share, cry, laugh, discover new selves together as they take the journey one day at a time. They go on a Station of the Cross at the San Francisco del Monte grotto, they hold their graduation and are joined by their families in the shade of a hundred year old tree. The six-hour reality show will air two hours a day from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. April 5, 6 and 7. In "Huwag Mangamba" (7 to 8 p.m. on Black Saturday, April 7), an urban poor activist, and a cancer survivor and wife of a member of the Apo Hiking Society share their compelling story of how they overcame trials and suffering when they offered their tribulations to God.

Traditional Holy Week religious services will be broadcast live from the Church of Gesu at the Ateneo de Manila University. Catch The Lord's Supper Mass, 4 to 6 p.m, on Maundy Thursday; Veneration of the Cross, 3 to 4 p.m., on Good Friday; and Easter Vigil, 8 to 10 p.m. on Black Saturday.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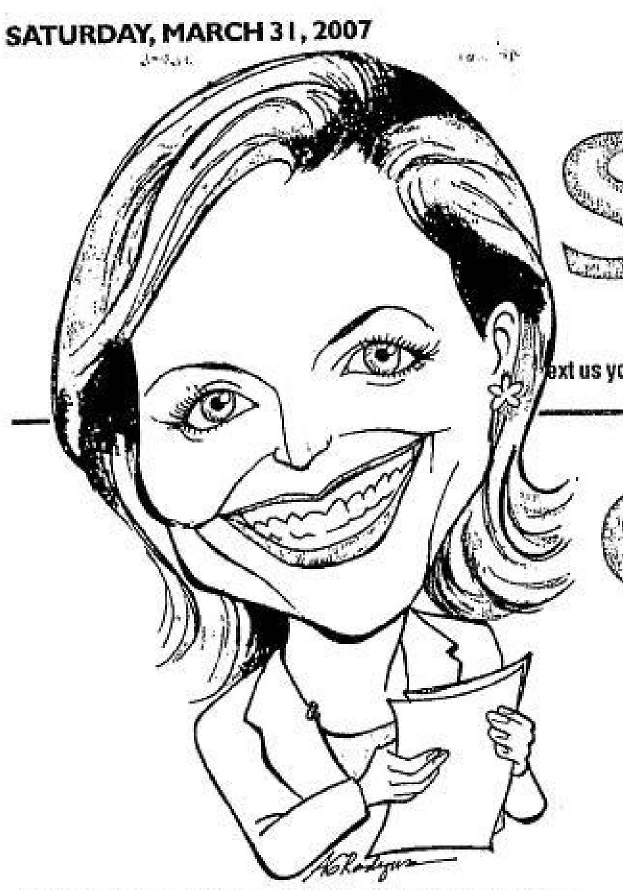
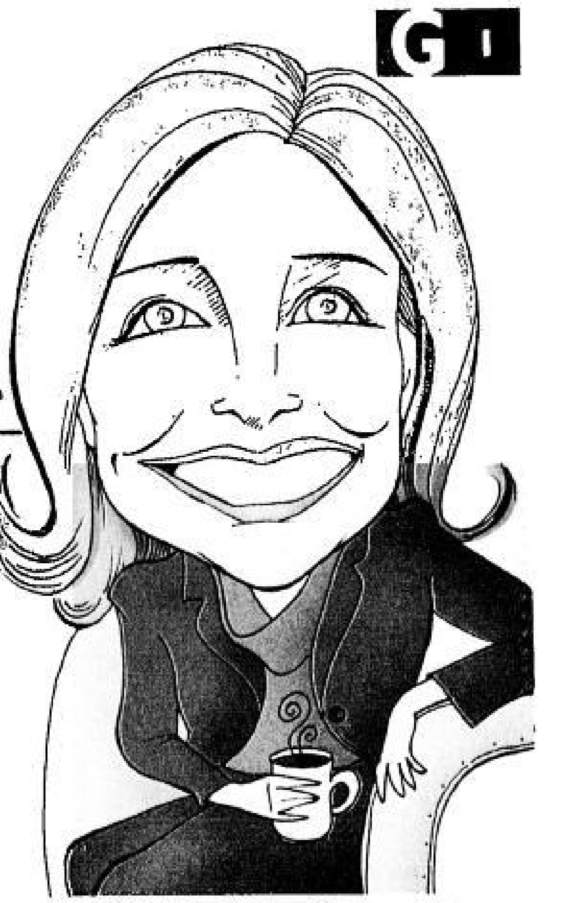


COURIC. Has gotten good reviews for her work on "The CBS Evening News." ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Couric, Vieira doing well in new TV shows



VIEIRA. Older than her predecessor, but younger at heart. STEPH BRAVO

By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN KATIE COURIC hosted NBC's "Today" show, viewers loved her for her no-nonsense approach, intelligence, sensitivity and big heart.

Last year, however, Couric decided to leave the daily morning show that had made her a household name for many years, to become the sole anchor on the "CBS Evening News."

Replacement

Loyal "Today" viewers were dismayed when Couric announced her decision to leave the show. They were worried that her replacement wouldn't be able to fill her shoes, or wouldn't be able to work well with the show's other hosts, Matt Lauer, Al Roker and Ann Curry.

So, when Couric's replacement, Meredith Vieira, first started cohosting the "Today" show some six months ago, viewers adopted a wait-and-see attitude. They knew that Vieira was a TV veteran, having hosted a number of talk and game shows.

But, "Today" was a special kind of program because it covered a gamut of topics, so its hosts had to be flexible and versatile. In addition, it was a morning show, so its regular talents had to know how to get people pumped up for the workday ahead.

Well, from the very start, Vieira proved to be a good choice to take over Couric's chores. She's older than Couric, but is younger at heart, and can interview a wide range of guests—from top government officials and members of royalty to single moms, children and even homeless persons.

Minor glitch

There've been times, however, when Vieira has felt overwhelmed by Roker's goofy and sometimes pesky hosting style. But, even this occasional irritant has turned out ot be a minor glitch in what is otherwise Vieira's "sweetheart" relationship with the other lead players in the show.

Recently, Vieira endeared herself to viewers even more when she took her pet dog, Jasper, to the show's set. Jasper isn't a show dog, and in fact looks rather rumpled, but his natural charm and his obviously *gaga* love for Vieira are utterly disarming.

As for Katie Couric, she's gotten good reviews for her work on the "CBS Evening News," with high ratings to boot, so it looks like she'll be in broadcast journalism for the long haul!

KATIE Couric was loved for her no-nonsense approach on the "Today" morning program.

VIEIRA. Good rapport with cohost Matt Lauer (left).

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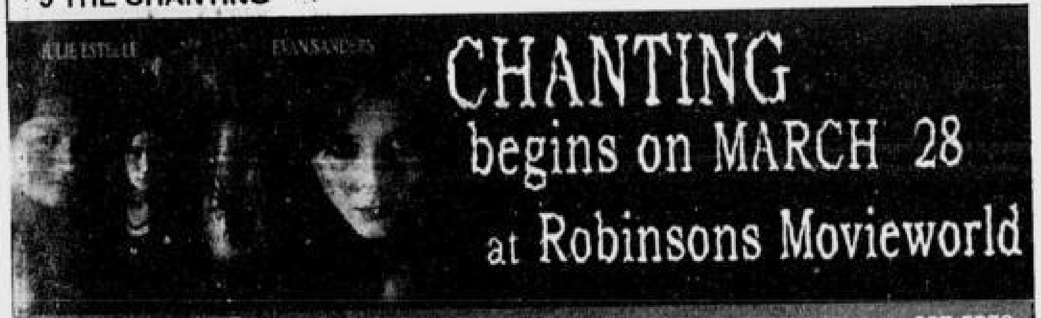

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- 4 THE CHANTING
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11 ROCKY BALBOA
12 NORBIT

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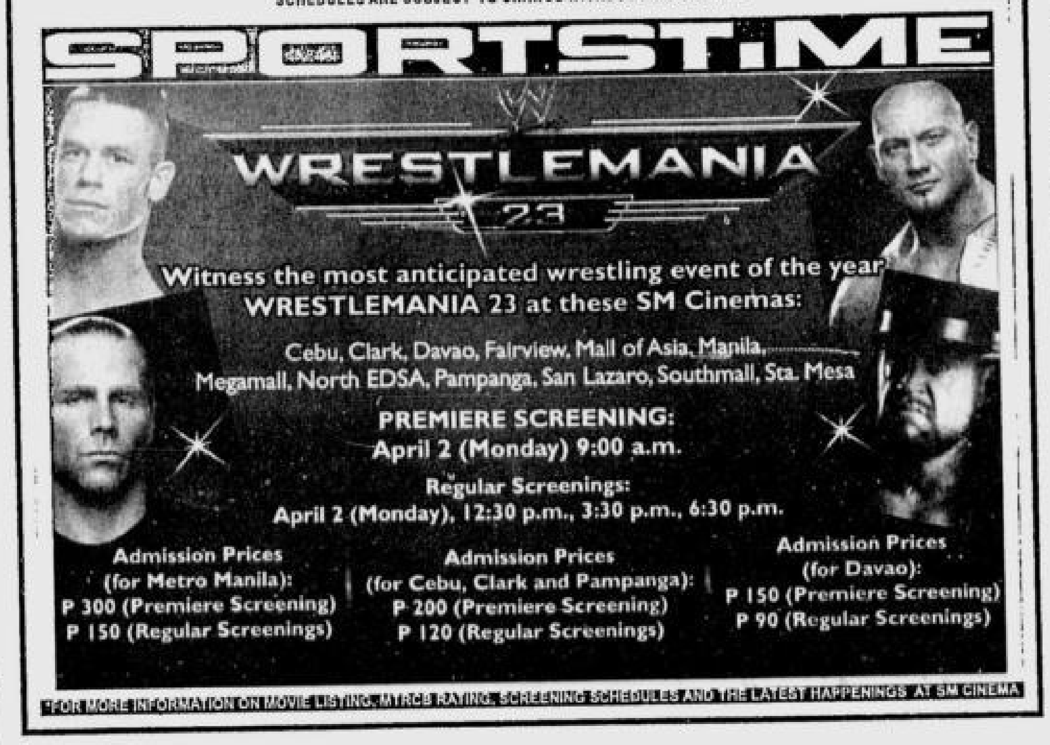

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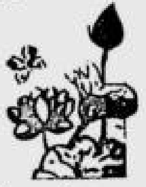
Regular Screenings:
April 2 (Monday), 12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m.

Admission Prices (for Metro Manila):	Admission Prices (for Cebu, Clark and Pampanga):	Admission Prices (for Davao):
P 300 (Premiere Screening)	P 200 (Premiere Screening)	P 150 (Premiere Screening)
P 150 (Regular Screenings)	P 120 (Regular Screenings)	P 90 (Regular Screenings)

*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Attaining wisdom

LOTUS POND



R. Valencia and S. Bismark

WISDOM IS ATtained by humble seekers of the Absolute Truth. Knowledge is revealed to them by divine arrangement due to their sincerity, humility, and their willingness to learn and change and for the better.

Self-realization eludes the arrogant and the lazy. Pride shuts off the heart and mind. The highest knowledge comes from learning about the goals of human life, realizing your true identity, and strengthening your relationship with the Supreme Being.

Mysteries

The pursuit of wisdom spares us from being in a quandary about the mysteries of life. A self-realized soul understands the experience of living and loving. He always works for the well-being of others. He leads people to a safe shelter.

Out of ignorance, we sometimes do despicable things. Out of wisdom, sages perform noble endeavors. Wisdom can be had freely. To receive it, the only qualification we need is sincerity.

A person "graduates" from this lifetime on his deathbed—his final examination. Sages live their lives with courage and confidence. They swear off material attachments and take shelter at the feet of the Supreme Being.

Some people cling to the thorns of material excesses, thus they bleed and writhe in pain—until they learn to apply the supreme lessons of life.

Live your life like a sage—and leave this material world in peace; live like an animal—and wallow in suffering and anxiety. When you learn about your true identity as a spirit-soul, the door of the spiritual world opens for you.

'Crime'...

From page G3

should also be part of the solution.

For women, the equivalent is Bilancia's crisis intervention program through psycho-spiritual healing. And, for children, an awareness and education program, "Break the Silence," on the impact of deafness on the indvidual and society as a whole.

Bilancia is a support group that features a Healing Center, Brahma Satya, Meditation Center, Counseling, Upward Bound and Reflexology. Call 728-9260, or e-mail bilancia2007@yahoo.com.

'Natural'

"Natural," an exhibit of pen and ink drawings by. Cota Deles-Yabut, runs at the Peta Theater Center, New Manila, QC, until April 11 (Monday-Saturday). The exhibit is for the benefit of Peta's Scholarship Fund for Young Artists. Call 725-6244.

LYRIC PIANO SPONSORSHIP. (L-R) Philippine Suzuki Association president Carmencita G. Arambulo signs contract with Lyric Piano president Alma Joy P. Cristobal and AsiaCon committee member Gigi Arambulo.

'Crime @ 9'...

From page G4

Manila run on April 7. The film is directed by Chris Noonan, the man who turned a pig into a megastar when he wrote and directed "Babe."

'How Do They Do it?'

Beginning April 6, episodes of Discovery Channel's "How Do They Do It?" premiere every Friday at 9 p.m., and encore every Saturday at 11 a.m. Each week, the show details how things are made—from the perfect baseball bat and rollercoasters to earthquake-proof skyscrapers and the world's largest warship.

'Riddles of the Bible'

This Holy Week, National Geographic Channel presents "Riddles of the Bible," leading off on April 2 at 6 p.m. with "Lost Cities," on the truth behind stories about Sodom and Gomorrah. Other episodes: April 3, "The Hunt for the Ark of the Covenant"; April 4, "The Secrets of Revelation"; April 5, "Exodus Revealed"; April 6, "Search for Noah."

Lyric furnishes piano requirements of Suzuki confab

Lyric Piano and Organ Corp. has committed P1 million worth of piano rentals as presentor of the third Asia Suzuki Method Conference, May 3-7. The Suzuki Method is a system of teaching music that starts with children as young as three years old. The conference will include classes and concerts. Lyric's sponsorship includes one Grand Piano, 15 upright pianos and seven Baby Grands. Philippine Suzuki Association president is Carmencita G. Arambulo, while Alma Joy P. Cristobal is president of Lyric Piano.

Movies on TV

On HBO, tomorrow at 11:30 a.m., "Twelve Monkeys." April 2 at noon, "City Hall." April 3 at 11 p.m., "Hearts and Souls." April 4 at 7 p.m., "Wag the Dog." April 5 at 11 p.m., "The Island." April 6 at 7 p.m., "Shark Tale." April 7 at 11 p.m., "Jerry Maguire." April 8 at 9 p.m., "Pride and Prejudice." April 9 at 9 p.m., "Stand and Deliver." April 10 at 3:45 p.m., "The Gospel."

On Cinemax, tomorrow at 9 p.m., "Silverado." April 2 at 3:05 p.m., "Escape from Alcatraz." April 3 at 8:35 a.m., "Protocol." April 4 at 3:15 p.m., "Darling Lili." April 5 at 6 a.m., "Made in Heaven." April 6 at 9:25 a.m., "The Big Red One." April 7 at 11:45 a.m., "A Dangerous Place." April 8 at 9 p.m., "Casino." April 9 at 11 p.m., "Whisper in the Dark." April 10 at 8 a.m., "The Stepford Wives."

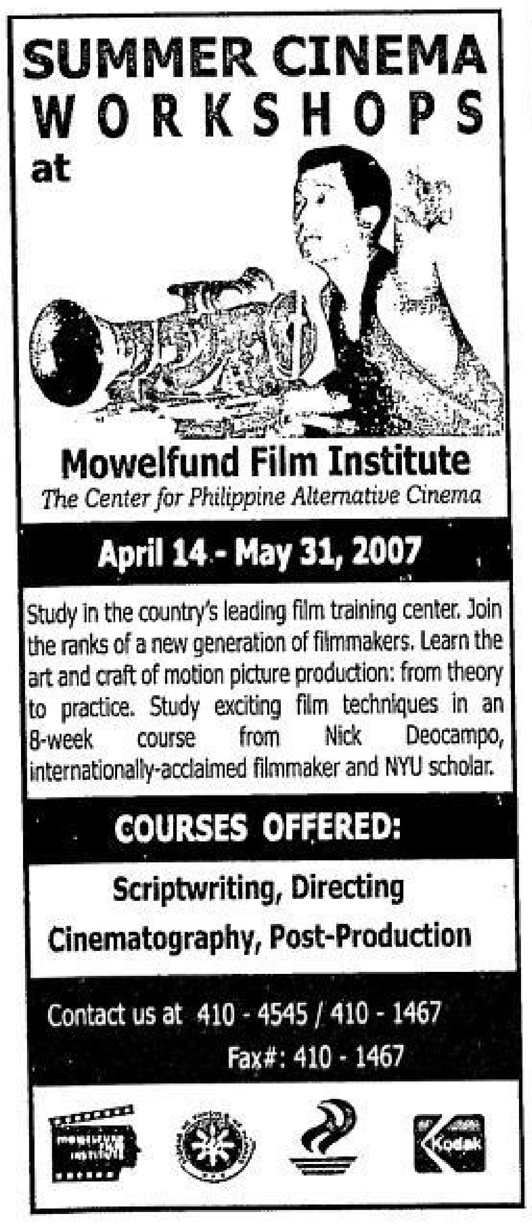
'Stomp the Yard'

A compelling drama about the quest for individuality and the power of fraternity, "Stomp the Yard" will be shown exclusively at Ayala Mall Cinemas. The hit movie features some of the most original dance performances ever filmed, and stars Columbus Short and Maegan Good.

Bilancia events

Last Sunday, Bilancia held an all-man march as part of the culminating activities of the celebration of Women's Month. The plight of women in abusive relationships continues to worsen. Since men are usually the perpetrators, they

'CRIME'/ G2



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Animated flick treads familiar ground

By Noelani Torre

YET ANOTHER FAIRY TALE REVIsioning effort, "Happily N'Ever After" isn't Grimm, but it certainly *is* grim. Derivative and visually disappointing, this 3D animated flick treads ground that has already been better-trodden by previous movies.

The story takes place in "Fairy Tale Land," where all fairy tales—from "The Little Red Riding Hood" to "Cinderella"—happen. In charge of everything is the Wizard, who makes sure that the scales of good and evil are in balance, and that everybody—*except* for the bad guys, of course—gets his happy ending.

Holiday

However, when the Wizard decides to take a holiday (golf in Scotland, believe it or not) and leaves his two bungling assistants, Mambo and Munk, to mind the shop, things start going wrong!

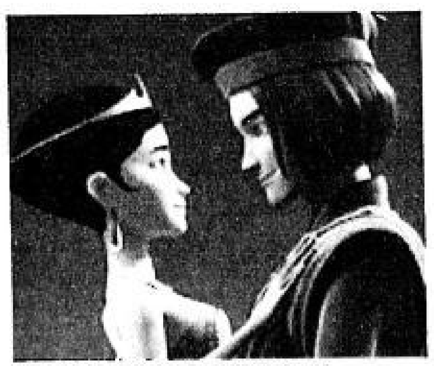
The main fairy tale being "updated" here is "Cinderella," and in this movie, the titular heroine sports a pixie cut and has a huge crush on a blond airhead of a Prince Charming. She's so fixated on him that she completely takes her friend, Rick, the royal dishwasher, for granted.

Kingdom

To cut a long story short, her evil stepmother, Frieda, steals the Wizard's staff and decides to run the kingdom her way—hence the added "N" in the beginning of "Ever"—and it's the good guys' job to make things right again.

So far, so "Shrek," right? In fact, "Happily N'Ever After" shares a producer with that *other* revisionist feature.

Like "Shrek," the movie's main purpose is to play around with the stereotypical elements of your traditional fairy tale—from the plot to the characters. It borrows "Shrek"'s modernized dialogue, fast-talking sidekicks, self-referencing, and a hip soundtrack. Unfortunately, it fails to duplicate the more important elements: Wit, charm, and rocking visuals.



"HAPPILY N'EVER AFTER." Derivative.

Directed by first-timer Paul Bolger from a script by Rob Moreland, the animated feature lacks the light, zany touch that made "Shrek" such a hit with adults and children alike. The script has a couple of decent one-liners, but the production has such a plodding pace that the lines are all but wasted.

Marionettes

The animation—which can sometimes be the saving grace of 3D animated flicks when nothing else is going for them—isn't impressive, either. Stiff and strangely flat, the characters sometimes move like marionettes, their faces hardly showing emotion. The style could have worked with another kind of movie, but here, it just makes the whole viewing experience drearier.

The voice talents—Sarah Michelle Gellar as Cinderella, Freddy Prinze Jr. as Rick, Sigourney Weaver as Frieda—try hard, but, with the exception of the fiery Weaver, they *don't* really make a difference.

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MONTAGE

'Crime @ 9' on Hallmark

"MIDSOMER MURDERS." Drama series investigates criminal undercurrents in a "peaceful" county.

JERRY BRUCKHEIMER'S "WITHOUT A Trace" debuts on Hallmark on April 2 at 9 p.m., in the channel's new "Crime @ 9" timeslot for the best thrillers and cerebral crime dramas.

Bruckheimer's riveting drama follows the adventures of the FBI's Missing Persons squad, which employs advanced profiling techniques to trace missing people's whereabouts. Golden Globe winner Anthony LaPaglia stars as Senior Agent jack Malone.

The ninth season of "Law & Order" starts at 9 p.m. on April 10. Shown every Tuesday and Wednesday, the acclaimed series introduces a new character, the tough Abbie Carmichael, played by Angie Harmon.

Based on Caroline Graham's popular detective novels, "Midsomer Murders" investigates the criminal undercurrents beneath "peaceful" Midsomer County. On April 6 at 9 p.m., the show's "Destroying Angel" episode is about the search for a missing fairground entertainer. Other episodes: April 13, "A Worm in the Bed." April 20, "A Tale of Two Hamlets."

On April 27 at 9 p.m., "Intelligence" will have a special TV movie premiere. Catch the weekly series every Friday starting May 4 at 10 p.m. In the show, a gangster (Ian Tracey) conspires with an intelligence chief (Klea Scott) and becomes her star informant. In turn, she provides him immunity from being prosecuted.

Renée Zellweger is 'Miss Potter'

Beatrix Potter was one of the world's most beloved spinners of fanciful and wondrously imaginative tales of children, and she's brought beautifully to life by Renée Zellweger in the should-see film for "children of all ages," "Miss Potter."

The film delights in Potter's talented pen—both as writer and artist. It tells of a woman whose life was a fascinating mix of professional achievement and private grief. Beatrix Potter was a woman ahead of her time!

"Miss Potter" starts its Metro

'CRIME'/ G3

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By Rito P. Asilo

"Alpha Dog"

D: Nick Cassavetes
S: Bruce Willis, Sharon Stone, Justin Timberlake, Ben Foster, Anton Yelchin

AFTER STRIKING OUT IN his 2005 big-screen debut, "Edison," pop music heartthrob Justin Timberlake takes a new lease on thespic life with a sterling performance in Nick Cassavetes' flashy depiction of the true story of teenage convict, Jesse James Hollywood.

One of the youngest criminals ever to "grace" the FBI's Most Wanted list, Hollywood, in 2000, ordered the kidnap and subsequent murder of the 15-year-old brother of a client who owed him $1,200 in drug money. He was eventually captured by the Interpol in Brazil in 2005.

In the movie, the juvenile delinquent is Johnny Truelove (Emile Hirsch), who snatches willing "victim," Zack (Anton Yelchin)—the brother of dopehead Jake (Ben Foster)—as he leaves his home, after a heated argument with his mother, Olivia (Sharon Stone).

The job of taking care of Zack falls into the hands of Frankie (Timberlake), who befriends the boy, takes him to parties, and even helps him lose his virginity—before events spiral down to Zack's murder!

Now, the good news: Timberlake can act! He imbues his character with nuanced vitality and instinctive intelligence, and never veers away from his role's emotional journey.

But, it's Foster who delivers a spellbinding, head-turning performance. Stone also stands out—*until* she's made to wear a wrinkly fat suit that's more comic than tragic. Bruce Willis, who plays Johnny's father, isn't asked to do much, except proselytize about good parenting.

The tragic story of Johnny *aka* Jesse James is fodder for big-screen action and drama, and Cassavetes ("The Notebook") ably captures the cheap thrills and attraction of juvenile delinquency. But, he falters in "glamorizing" crime and violence, and for glossing over the cautionary lessons that can be learned from Truelove's story.

After all, the fun ceases when the excitement wanes—and there are only so many thrills that can be had when cinematic flash outweighs substance.

CARICATURE BY STEPH BRAVO

THE POP music heartthrob turns in a sterling performance.

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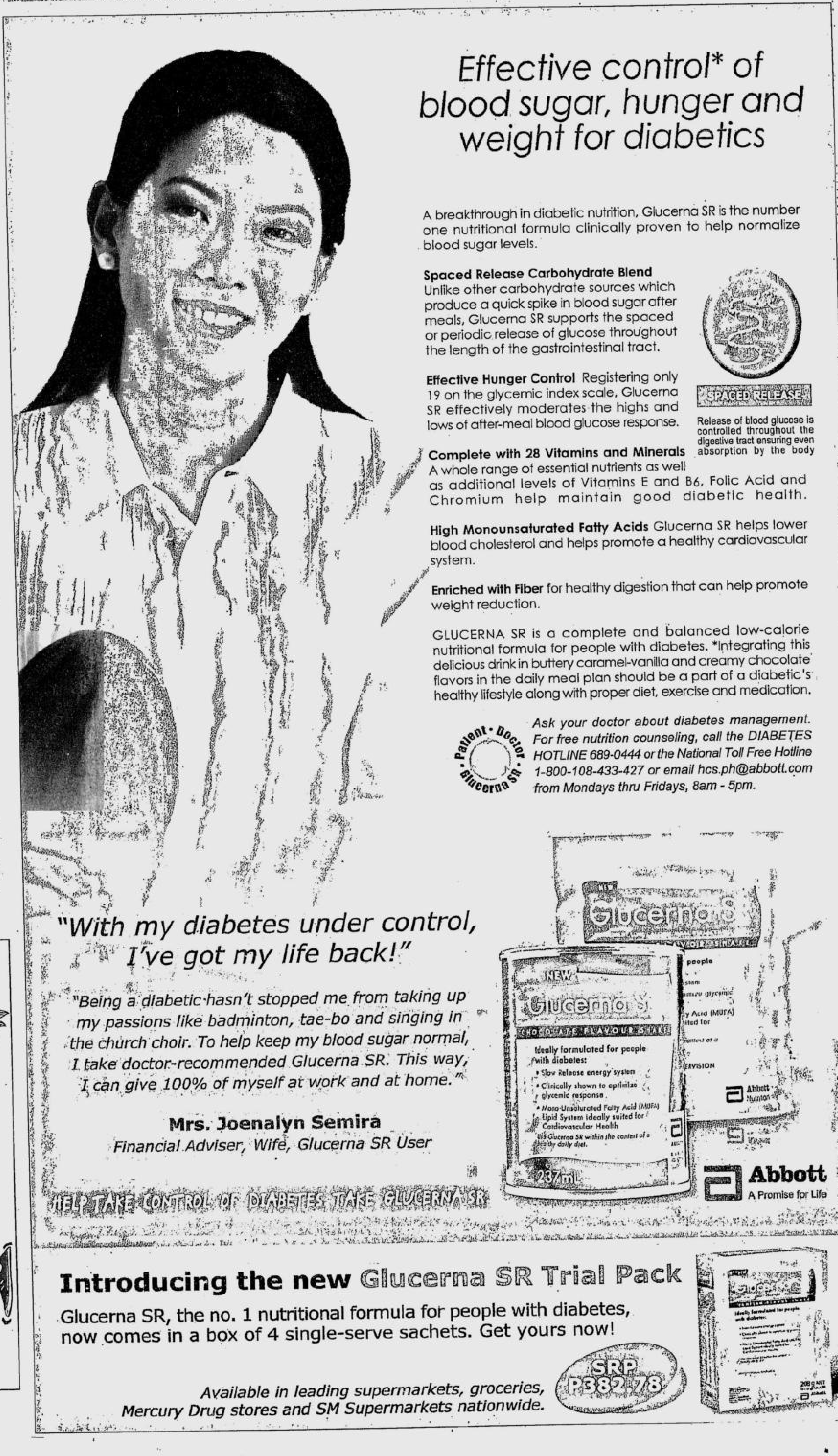

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STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

TERESITA ANG-SEE says that the Philippines is the land of her birth and, although her blood may be Chinese, her roots also run deep in the Philippine soil.

She received the TOWNS (Ten Outstanding Women in Nation's Service) Award in 1992, for bridging understanding and cooperation between Filipinos and *Tsinoys*. For over three decades, she has been busy doing NGO work. She is an executive trustee of the Kaisa Heritage Center, which houses the Bahay Tsinoy museum.

Support

She provides support to victims of kidnapping, and has earned the "crimefighter" tag.

EXTRAORDINARY/ H3

Diabetes Information Series from Abbott International

Insights on Proper Eye Care

People with diabetes have a higher risk of developing eye disorders. If not given proper attention, minor problems could turn into more serious cases that may lead to blindness.

For a better understanding of proper eye care, here's a short illustration of what goes on inside the eye:

Light first enters the *cornea*, or the front part of the eye, and travels through the *anterior chamber* filled with a protective fluid called the *aqueous humor*. The light then passes through the *pupil*, an opening in the *iris* or the colored part of the eye, and then goes through the lens for further re-focusing. The light enters another fluid-filled chamber in the center of the eye (called the *vitreous*), after which it finally hits the back of the eye or the *retina*.

One part of the retina specializes in the registration of fine details. This tiny area of extra-sharp vision is called the *macula*. Like a camera film, the retina records the images and converts it into electrical signals that are sent to the brain for decoding.

Diabetes and Eye Problems

Several factors like blood sugar and blood pressure levels and how long one has had diabetes can affect the risk of developing eye problems.

People with diabetes, for example, are more likely to develop glaucoma than people without diabetes.

Glaucoma occurs when pressure builds up in the eye and causes the aqueous humor to surge in the anterior chamber, damaging the blood vessels that carry blood to the retina and the optic nerve. Vision is eventually lost because of the constant pressure applied on the nerve and the retina.

The risk of developing cataracts is also higher for people with diabetes. A cataract happens when there is clouding on the clear lens which blocks the light. People with diabetes tend to get cataracts earlier; their cataracts also advance at a much faster rate than people without diabetes.

Diabetic retinopathy, a general term for all disorders of the retina that cause swelling and pain, is also common among people with diabetes.

How to Avoid Eye Problems

To maintain the proper health and condition of the eye, here are a few tips:

First, blood sugar levels must always be kept under control. Research shows that keeping blood sugar within the normal range can help lower the risk of developing retinopathy and other eye conditions; it can also help delay the progress of eye problems among those who are already afflicted.

Second, blood pressure must be constantly monitored. High blood pressure can make eye problems worse.

Third, the smoking habit must be stopped because this only makes the arteries harden faster.

Fourth, a dilated eye exam with an eye care professional should be scheduled at least once a year. Only optometrists and ophthalmologists can detect the signs of eye problems, and only ophthalmologists are capable of administering the appropriate treatment.

When to See an Eye Care Professional

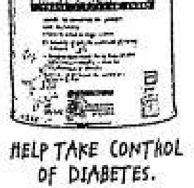
When one or more of the following symptoms are observed, immediate consultation with an eye care professional is advised:

- Blurry vision
- Trouble in reading signs or books
- Double vision
- Pain in one or both eyes
- Persistent reddening of the eyes
- Pressure in the eye
- Seeing spots or floating images
- Impaired peripheral vision
- Inability to see straight lines

Finally, here are recommendations from the American Diabetes Association to help people with diabetes maintain healthy eyesight:

- Those between the ages of 10 and 29 years old who've had diabetes for at least 5 years should have an annual dilated eye exam.
- Those who are 30 years old and up are *required* to have an annual dilated eye exam. More frequent exams may be needed if eye disease has already been diagnosed.
- Those who are pregnant or planning to get pregnant should have a dilated eye exam.
- Any change in vision requires the immediate attention of an eye care professional.

For more information on Diabetes Management and FREE nutritional or diet counseling, call the Abbott Nutrition Diabetes Hotline at 6890-443 or toll free 1-800-108-433-427 from Mondays through Fridays, 8am to 5pm or e-mail queries at hcs.ph@abbott.com.



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300 R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30	THE GROOMSMEN R13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	ROCKY BALBOA PG13 1:10,3:30,5:50, 8:10,10:30

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2 TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 1:35, 4:00, 6:25, 8:50, 11:15 G
3 300 12:15, 2:45, 5:35 R-13 | TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES 8:20, 10:45 G
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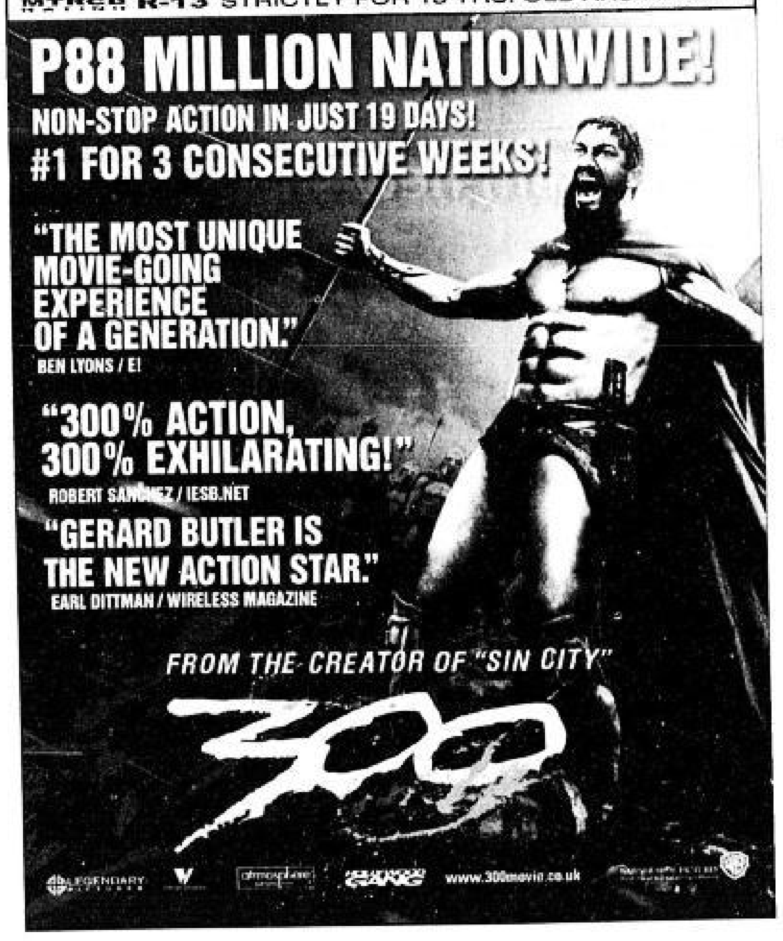

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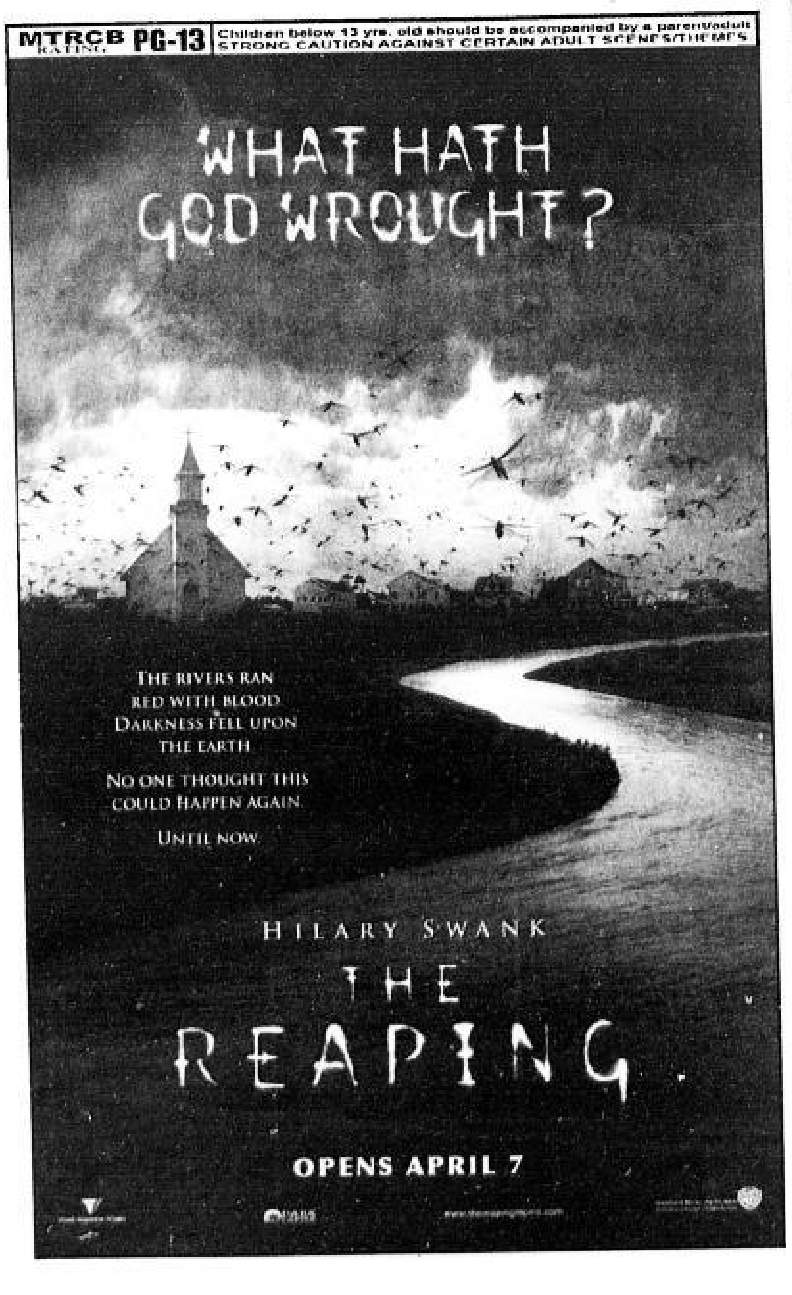

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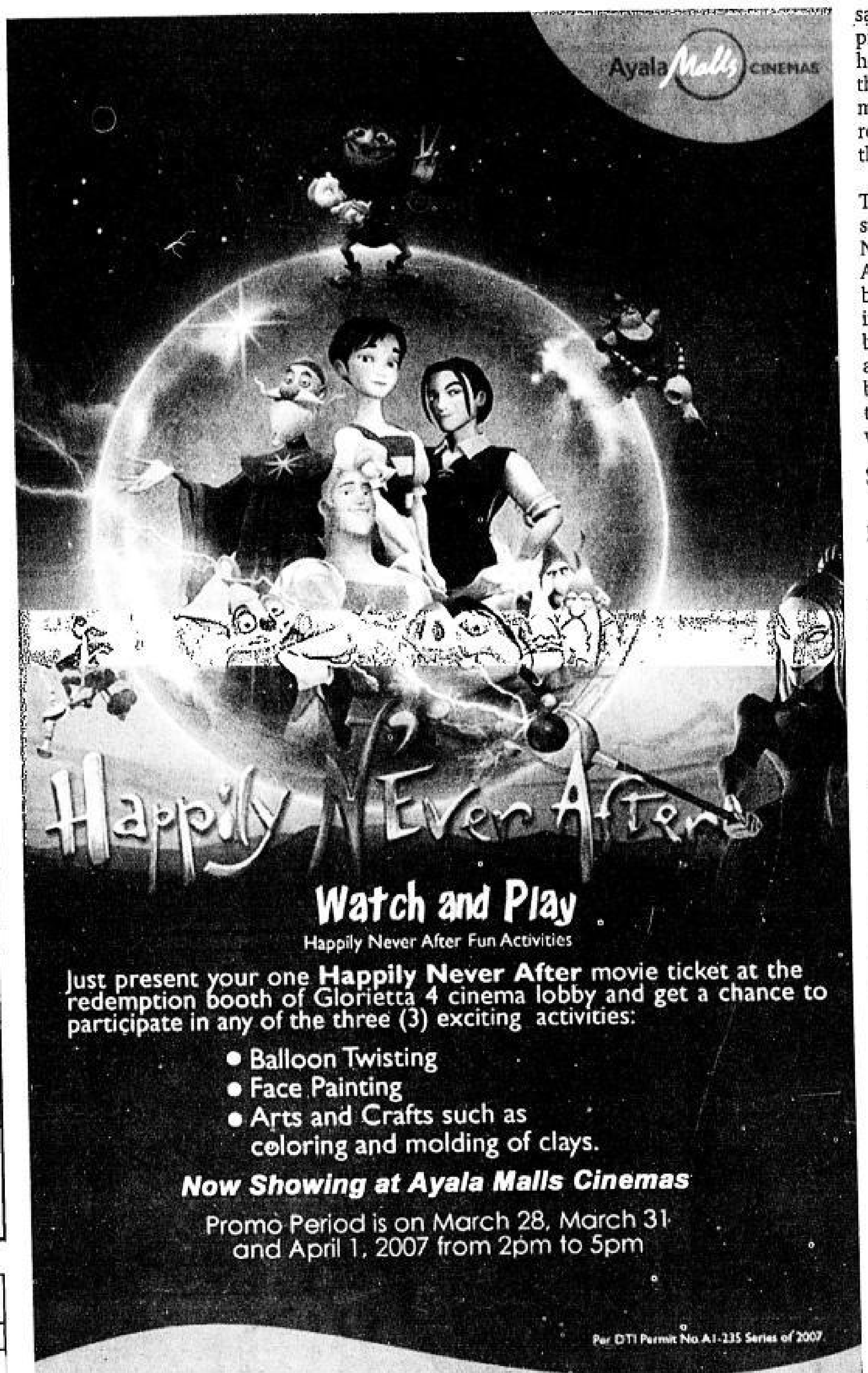

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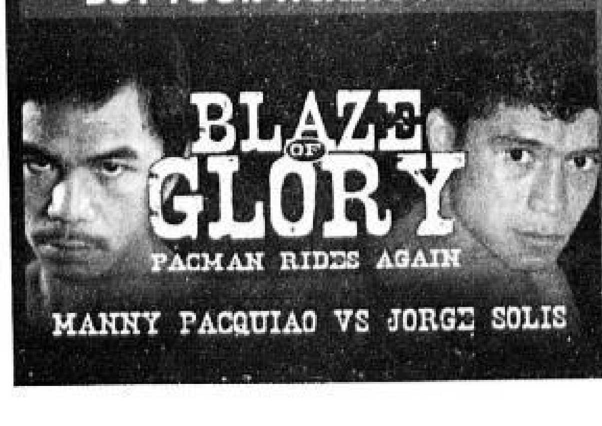

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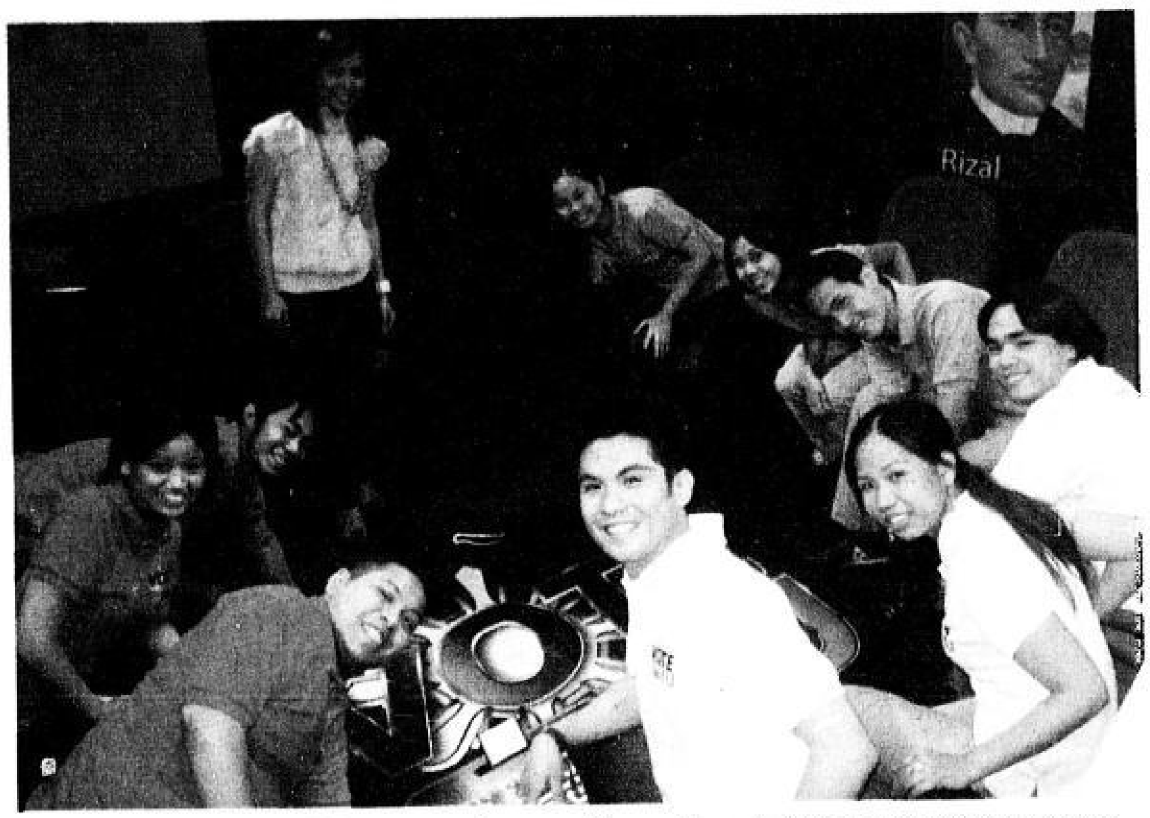
New game show stresses importance of electoral process



DATU (STANDING). Her TV program underscores the need to protect the sanctity of voters' ballots.

By Rica Arevalo

THE UPCOMING elections-related game show, "Vote 4 U," won't ask you to vote for a particular candidate, but it'll encourage you to vote as a responsible citizen.

Youthful energy

At the first taping session, the show's set was brimming with the participants' youthful energy. Three teams competed: Blue Team was made up of Gianna Abad, Greg Cahiles and Nadz Torres; White Team included PJ Lanot, Kristoffer Neil Diño and Jamie Villanueva, and Red Team was represented by Paul Fernando, Happy Ferraren and John Lester Belican.

The teams had to go through different challenges and, along the way, learned about the country's political history.

Tasks

Their tasks included counting the number of statues in the People Power monument, visiting Plaza Miranda (site of the infamous bombing of the Liberal Party's *miting de avance* in 1972), and exploring Escoda street (to remember the women who fought for their right to suffrage during the 1937 plebiscite).

In the war room, players debated and planned their actions—all in the spirit of understanding the importance of the electoral process.

To stress the need to protect the sanctity of voters' ballots, the players engaged in a paintball game. They realized that it took guts to deliver the ballot boxes untampered.

Unique

"Vote 4 U" is a unique voter-education program whose bottom line is: We vote for our own sake—we vote for the future of our nation.

Hosted by Ces Datu, the show also features political analyst William Esposo as game master. Call Sheila 0921 340-9381.

Cable disabled

From page H4

all about the reliability of the procedures they have instituted, or at least approved?

On the third day, Sunday, still no cable signal. More phone calls. No apologies, just: "Yes, the *service* crew will be reminded *again* to—etc."

Assurance

Alas, despite this assurance, still no *service* crew. By this time, at our house, the word *"service"* has acquired levels of irony that would do a foundry proud.

Finally, on the fourth day, Monday, the *service* crew finally arrived (after a wonderful vacation in Bali?), and our little problem caused by the previous *disservice* crew was finally fixed.

Fifth question: Why had it taken *five* days, instead of five hours, for the problem to be solved by the cable company and its happy little gremlins?

Why had nobody bothered to apologize for the fact that the problem had been created by some of the company's own personnel?

Would the erring personnel even get a black mark on their records for their error, which had deprived a paying customer of cable service for five days?

What about those disembodied voices handling the complaint? Would their records also show that they hadn't been able to get results for the customer? Wasn't this what they were hired to do?

Recourse

Is *anybody* liable? What recourse does the poorly served customer have? Will this general lack of good service and respect for the customer be allowed to fester by the cable company?

This is just one case. Do the company's officials even care about "just one case"? How many more such cases will it take to affect the company's fortunes for the worse?

The company spends millions to fluff up its image and create customer interest and satisfaction, but its general bumbling and bungling in this instance has effectively canceled out all those millions and left it with one big, black eye, at least for the viwers adversely affected by its blithe disdain.

Food for thought

Note that we haven't zeroed in on a specific cable company. May the executives of *all* the cable service companies we have take this one little instance as food for thought, a timely reminder, and, hopefully, motivation to review their companies' procedures in detail, so that *all* of their paying customers shall be truly *served*.

Extraordinary crimefighter

From page H2

She helped organized the Movement for Restoration of Peace and Order, the Citizens' Action Against Crime, and chairs the People's Law Enforcement Board.

In 1987, Ang-See founded Kaisa to enhance appreciation for the role of *Tsinoys* in mainstream Philippine society. The group aims to tap into the vast potential of the *Tsinoy* community in nation-building.

Ang-See is one of the 128 recipients of the TOWNS Awards for the past 30 years.

TOWNS president, Dr. Imelda Villar, is encouraging organizations and individuals to submit nominations to the TOWNS Secretariat and to Museo Pambata Foundation. You can download nomination forms at www.towns.org.ph. Call 831-5195, or e-mail townsimelda@yahoo.com.

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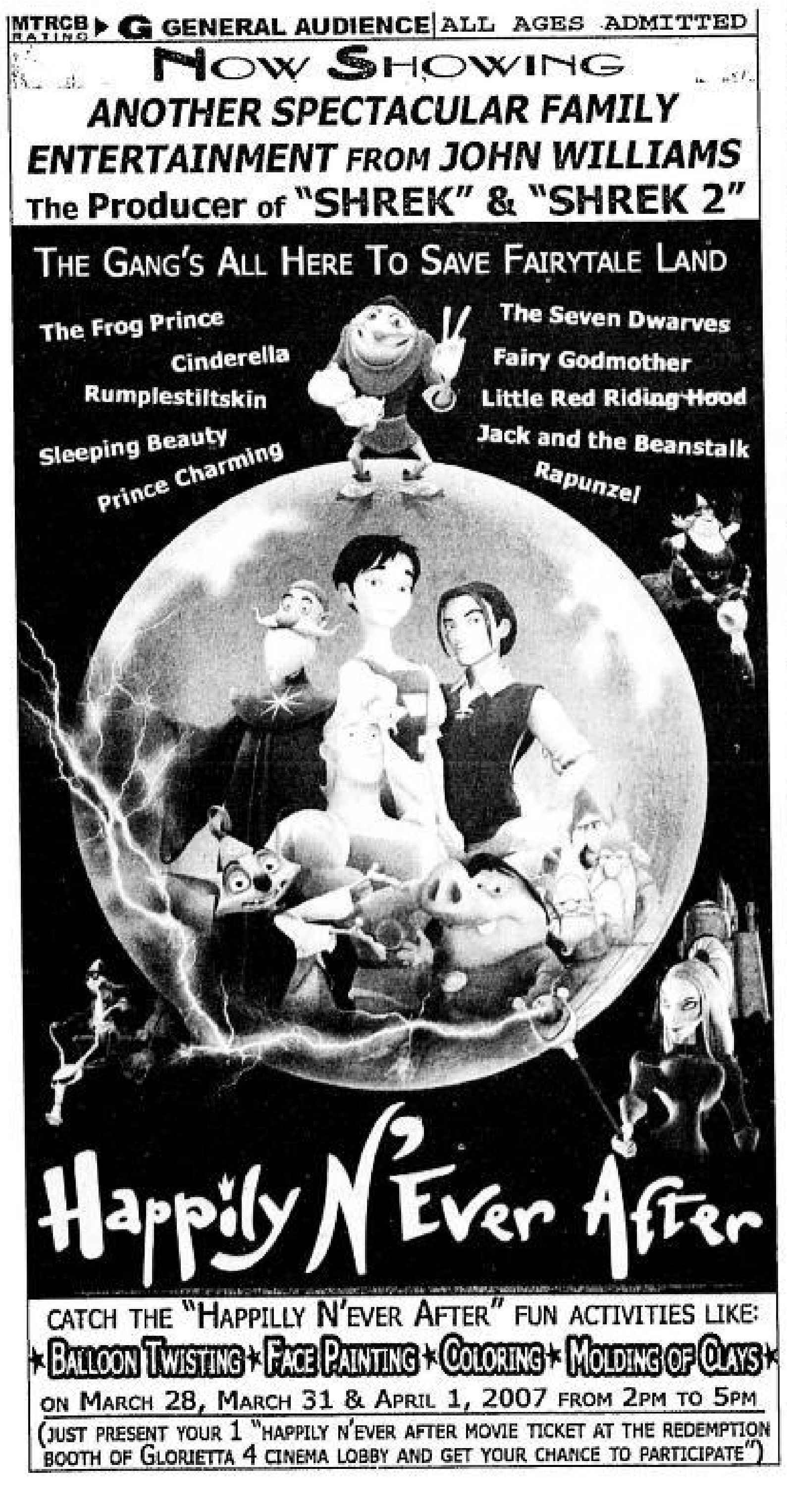

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'Grey's Anatomy' star puts success in perspective

NEW YORK—KATE Walsh has something in common with the sexy neonatal surgeon she plays on ABC's hit medical drama, "Grey's Anatomy": Love issues.

"Sometimes, I ask myself, 'What am I doing? Am I becoming my character? —Or is my character becoming me?,'" she says in an interview in Best Life magazine. "I'm starting to get superstitious. I definitely identify with my character in that, romantically, at least, this is not where I thought I'd be at 39!"

Big break

Walsh was a regular on "The Drew Carey Show" and appeared on other TV series, including "Karen Sisco" and "The Fugitive," before getting her big break on "Grey's Anatomy."

Last month, the ABC network said it was planning to air a special two-hour episode featuring Walsh (and guest starring Taye Diggs) as a test run for a new series.

"I feel torn between having the time of my life and wanting serious things—like a surplus of love for a family and all that," Walsh confesses.

WALSH. The boundaries between her and her character are beginning to blur! AP

Maturity

"But, what's in front of me right now is work. Often, I think it would have been so great if this success had happened when I was 28. But then again, I wouldn't have had the maturity then to deal with it and not end up in rehab!"

Walsh finds the boundaries between herself and her character beginning to blur, perhaps more than she feels entirely comfortable with.

"With an hour-long drama, you start playing closer to who you are, because the writers are always around you. Then, they start writing *for* you," she says, explaining how her character has become more vulnerable and complex.

Reaction

Asked for her reaction to the blowup over castmate Isaiah Washington's antigay slur about costar T.R. Knight, Walsh says there has been "no fallout on the set, really."

She adds: "But, it was sad and annoying. And it eclipsed our win at the Golden Globes!" *AP*

Cable disabled

By Nestor U. Torre

ONE FRIDAY THIS MONTH, we arrived home and discovered to our dismay that our TV cable service had been cut.

No, we weren't remiss in our payments. Would you believe, a neighbor's cable had been cut because he hadn't been paying for it for some months—and it appeared that *our* cable had also been cut off in the process!

How do these things happen? Shouldn't a cable service provider have rigid procedures to make sure that paying customers are not "accidentally" deprived of the service they're paying good money for?

Busy signal

Ticked off, we called our cable service to complain. Busy. After an hour, we called again. Still busy. All day long we kept getting a busy signal.

Even more miffed now, we asked a second question: Shouldn't a cable *service* provider have enough phone lines open to be of better and prompter *service* to its customers?

Why does this company think it's okay to make complaining customers call all day long and not be able to make a connection in order to register their complaints?

At night, we were finally able to reach the cable service operator, or a functionary thereof. He took down our complaint and said a *service* crew would be sent over to rectify the problem that the previous *disservice* crew had created due to its clumsy fingers or carelessness or sheer incompetence.

When would the rectifying crew come over? The disembodied and rather bored voice at the other end of the line couldn't say. Just have faith, OK?

Third question: Shouldn't the cable service provider train its personnel better in more helpfully handling complaints? Especially when the problem has been created by the company's other personnel?

More calls

The following day, Saturday, we woke up to still no cable signal on our TV set. More calls. Finally, we were able to get through. Oh, yes, they were aware of the complaint, and the *service* crew was scheduled to come today. What time? He couldn't say, etc.

At day's end, still no repair crew. More phone calls. The crew would be reminded, etc.

Fourth question: If even *repair* schedules that have already been set aren't met, why isn't the obvious unreliability of the procedure not being remedied?

Do these bored, disembodied voices have managers? Isn't it the obligation of these managers to take a look at the day's workload, and seeing lack of compliance, raise hell because the customer is not being served as well as he should be?

Don't these managers care at

CABLE/ H3

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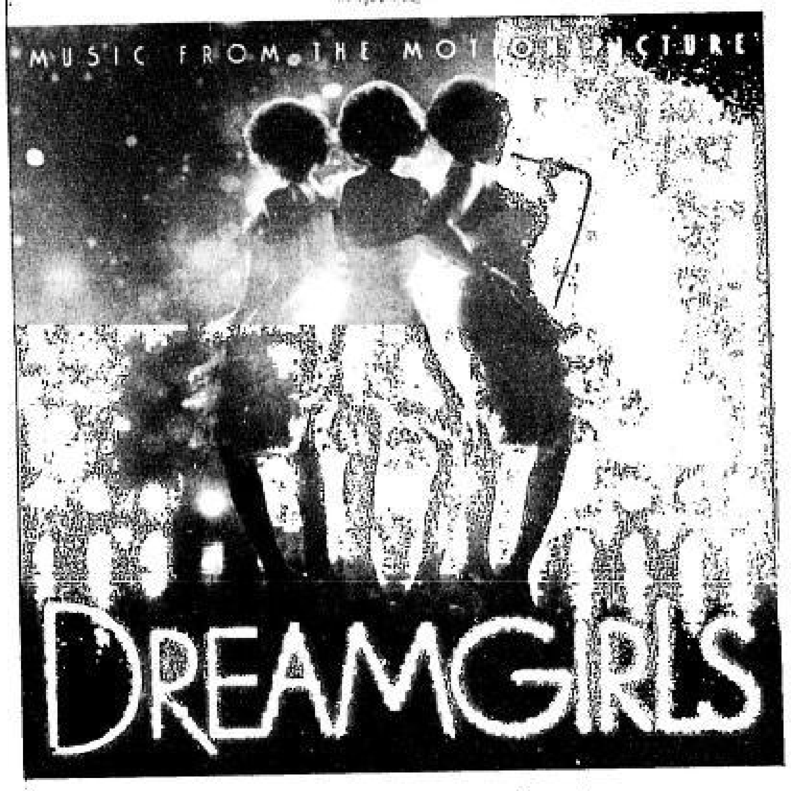
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4	One Night Only (Disco)	Dreamgirls	SB078	1NIGHT
5	Cadillac Car	Dreamgirls	SB092	CAD
6	Fake Your Way To The Top	Dreamgirls	SB093	FAKE
7	Family	Dreamgirls	SB094	FAMILY
8	It's All Over	Dreamgirls	SB098	ALLOVER
9	I Want You Baby	Dreamgirls	SB099	IWANTU
10	Move	Dreamgirls	SB100	MOVE
11	I Am Changing	Jennifer Hudson	SB096	
12	I Meant You No Harm	Eddie Murphy	SB097	
13	When I First Saw You	Jamie Foxx	SB101	IFIRST
14	When I First Saw You (Duet)	JFoxx/Dreamgirls	SB102	IFIRSTDUET
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SATURDAY Special

Sharon Cuneta, up close and personal

By Rito P. Asilo

WE WERE SUPPOSED TO INTERVIEW SEN. Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan at the Ilustrado restaurant in Intramuros when we first met Sharon Cuneta at close range.

But, it wasn't Sharon or Kiko who won us over that day: As we watched a TV crew interview the Megastar, a very pretty, two-year-old girl—a miniature replica of her mother—caught our eye: Miel, the couple's youngest child.

The sweet, adorable tyke, with her *yaya* behind her, approached us after we said hello. After Miel "recited" her full name to us, we asked her: "Do you also sing like your Mama?" She nodded shyly and, upon prodding, started singing Barney's song, "I love you, you love me…" We were smitten, naturally!

Indeed, the little charmer is her mother's daughter—living proof of how well her parents have been raising her and her older sisters, KC and Frankie.

Night owls

Obviously, the Megastar mother is very close to her children. She told us how much she was missing KC, her eldest child, who flew back to Paris recently. In fact, Sharon would text us at four in the morning (we're both night owls), apologizing for not having replied to us much earlier—because she was online chatting with KC!

We immediately felt her honesty, warmth and sincerity the first time we spoke with her—and we were blown away by her candor and intelligence. She hugged us as she thanked us for the article we wrote last year about her multiplatinum-selling album, "Isn't It Romantic?"

Early on, she said she had been wanting to get in touch with us, but she always gets "scared when something very good is written about me by someone I haven't met yet. Maybe it's this childhood thing of being conscious of not 'overreacting'—even to someone nice—for fear of being (mis)labeled *sipsip*!"

Sharon is cautious even in her choice of projects. She showed us the lineup of songs for the follow-up to "Isn't It Romantic?"

Her next movie under Star Cinema is likewise something to look forward to. She reveals, "I play the role of a caregiver; we start shooting next month.

"I'm leaving for England and Prague after the May elections, and I don't know how I'll survive three weeks without my kids! I'm excited to work with Chito Roño for the first time, because it's always been my dream to be directed by him since *Ate* LT (Lorna Tolentino) won a best actress grand slam in 1992 (for 'Narito ang Puso Ko,' which Roño directed)."

Intimate details

In a truly candid interview, Sharon shares intimate details about her life, love and career:

Her recollection alone of how she and Kiko met deserves a big-screen adaptation—a romcom, if you will—about an extremely successful albeit cautious actress (Sharon), understandably "battle-scarred" from a previous failed marriage, who finally meets the man of her dreams—Kiko. How did their union, perceived by most as ideal, come about?

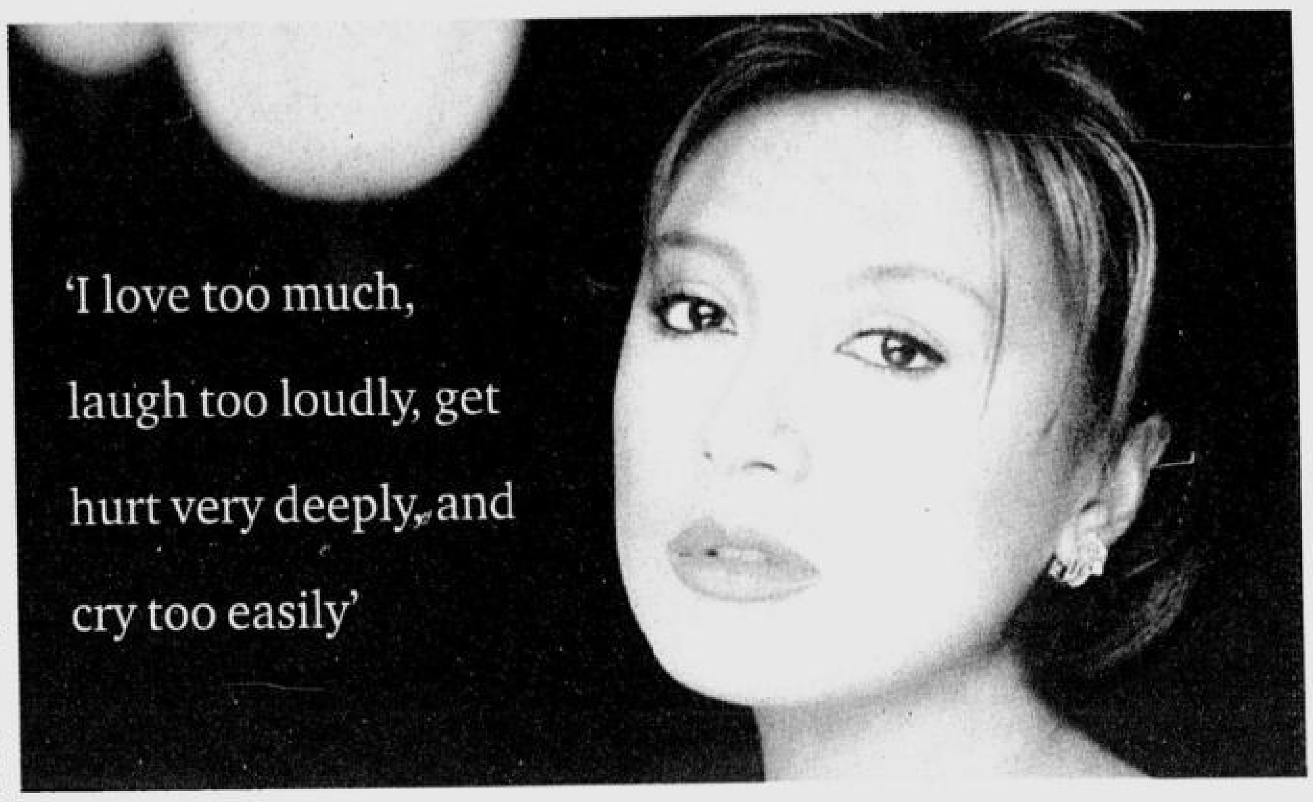
Sharon muses, "Your having used the word 'perceived' hits the nail on the head! There's no such thing as a perfect couple, and marriage does take a lot of work. Staying married or doing what it takes to be happy together is a decision you renew every single day. It's true *kasi* that the romance wanes after some years. What's important is that you recognize that and do something every so often to get out of the inevitable rut that you, as a couple, fall into.

Wedding

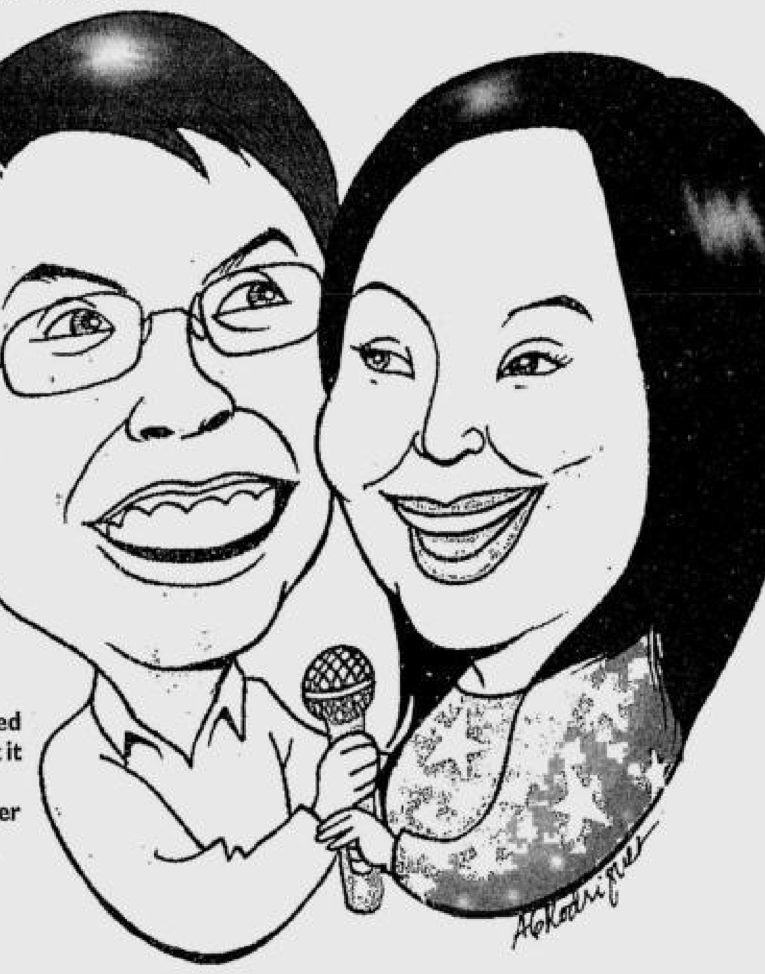
"I 'met' Kiko at the wedding of his brother Anthony and Maricel Laxa in December 1993. Did sparks fly? No! I was on my way to the washroom, and he happened to be standing nearby. He looked like Anthony, so I thought he must be one of the siblings. So, I said 'Hi.' He answered with a curt 'Hello,' and I thought, '*Akala mo kung sino ito, hindi naman kamukha ni* Keanu Reeves! *Ang yabang*!'

"Now, everytime we look back, Kiko says, 'See? You remember!' *Kasi, kung 'pinansin' daw*

SHARON/ 12



'I love too much, laugh too loudly, get hurt very deeply, and cry too easily'



FOR the Pangilinans, staying married or doing what it takes to be happy together is a decision they renew every single day.

CARICATURE BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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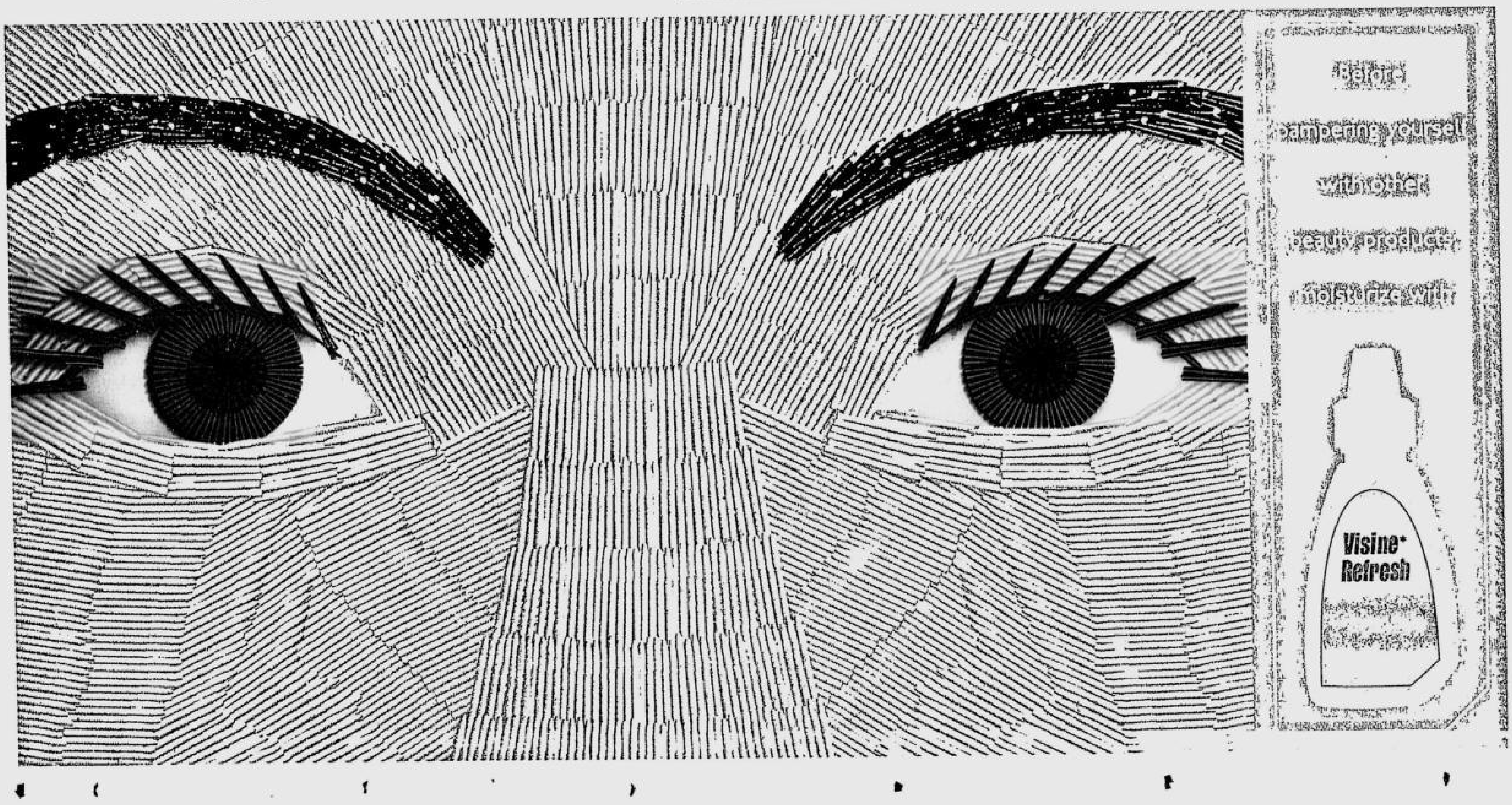
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Rocky packs a punch in final installment

By Noelani Torre

ROCKY (Stallone) beats up the current champ (Antonio Tarver).

JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT the "Rocky" well had finally gone dry (he *did* suffer from brain damage in "Rocky V"), the never-say-never fighter steps into the ring again—and you find yourself rooting for him once more.

It's just hard not to like the big guy, though he has been sorely trying the patience of various generations of viewers for 30 years.

After four increasingly embarrassing sequels, who would've thought that it would be now, when he's pushing 60, that he would redeem himself? And this applies not just to the fictional character, but to the creator and actor, as well.

Past achievements

Actor-director-writer Sylvester Stallone is the force behind "Rocky Balboa," the newest—and last—installment of the action franchise. Like his favorite character, the star is respected for his past achievements, but has now become something of a joke—he makes a conveniently large target for parody, after all.

The movie revolves around the 58-year-old former heavyweight champ, who decides to fight the current undefeated titleholder.

Making the movie sounds like the worst move Sly Stallone could've made, but people have been cheering, not jeering.

It looks like he will have the last laugh—if he doesn't give in to temptation and make yet another sequel.

In the movie, Rocky is an athlete long past his prime. His beloved wife is dead, he's estranged from his businessman son, and the only boxing he does is in the stories he tells to the patrons of his restaurant.

Then, a computer-simulated rematch pits a younger version of himself against the talented but unpopular present-day heavyweight champ—and Rocky emerges victorious. The simulation causes a buzz, and the young boxer (played by real-life, former light-heavyweight Antonio Tarver) invites the old pugilist to fight an exhibition game. Rocky, however, plans to make the match a real one.

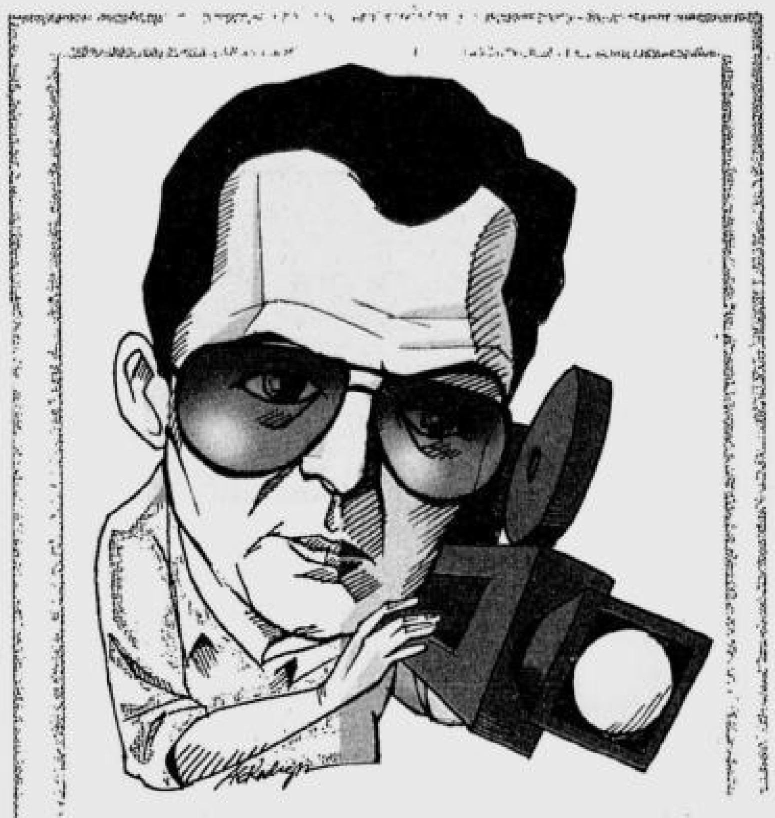
Pop-culture icon

A fitting ending to the fictional career of a pop-culture icon, the film is the only "Rocky" sequel that should have been made. It reminds you why you loved the 1976 Oscar-winning original in the first place.

The character himself was what made it all work, and 27 years later, he proves that he still has what it takes to move you to the edge of your seat and forget the movie's problems with plot and style.

It *does* have quite a few of those. For example, Sly is once again overdoing the schmaltz when he condemns his character to mope around his dead wife's grave and to philosophize to a dog.

Nonetheless, once the strains of "Gonna Fly Now" start playing and the bell of the first round rings, all is forgiven. It may be nostalgia, but it doesn't hurt to indulge in it—because it feels good!


BROCKA. Filmed his controversial masterwork in secret.

'Orapronobis' is as relevant as ever

By Behn Cervantes

THE LATE LINO BROCKA WAS an actor's director. Because of his theater background, he drew from his actors performances worthy of acting awards. As a result, the likes of Christopher de Leon, Bembol Roco, Hilda Koronel, Gina Alajar and Philip Salvador received a number of awards for excellence in acting.

I recently viewed the banned Brocka film, "Orapronobis." My hair stood on end when I realized that the human rights abuses depicted in 1987 are once again taking place—20 years later! The same complaints are being lodged by human rights groups and families of victims as the military continues to rationalize the situation with the same, old excuses. History repeats itself.

Documents

"Orapronobis" was filmed in secret. The administration insisted then that no abuses were taking place no matter if documents proved that there were, indeed, hundreds of victims of vicious crimes committed by Mindanao-based vigilante groups.

The film isn't pleasant to watch: Brocka graphically depicted the vigilantes' cruelty, and underscored the military's cold-hearted and vacuous explanations. Certainly, if the film were allowed to be shown then, a good number of its cast would have been honored for their performances.

Salvador portrayed an ex-priest who had to wrestle with his conscience—and the two women in his life! His performance was gripping and sympathetic. Alajar (as Salvador's romantic interest in the underground) likewise rendered a finely-tuned performance that tugged at viewers' hearts.

Accolades

In contrast, Roco's character was so evil that a viewer I showed the film to in Macau actually cheered Alajar on when her character shot him.

If the film were shown, Roco would have had a chance for a grand slam as best supporting actor. Philip, Gina and Dina Bonnevie (as Salvador's feisty, confused wife) would certainly have merited accolades themselves. Joel Lamangan, who played a smooth-talking military officer, also turned in a memorable performance.

It's time for the MTRCB to reevaluate its predecessor's decision to ban the film from public screening. Filipinos have missed out on a well-crafted movie that boasted of insightful writing, atmospheric cinematography, and fine performances from its talented cast.

PHILIP Salvador played an ex-priest in Brocka's daring motion picture.

LOKOMOTIV'S rock fusion enlivens local music scene

By Marlet D. Salazar

LOKOMOTIV. Their music "celebrates the good things in life."

MUSIC IS SERIOUS BUSINESS for the guys from Lokomotiv. But, when they're not pounding skins and doing axe chores, they also know how to have some fun.

Last month, the heavy rock band based in Southern California wrapped up their tour in the country to promote their debut album, "Rock n' Roll Death Toll."

Evolution may seem like an inappropriate word for the young band. Only a couple of years on the music scene, Lokomotiv had members come and go before coming up with its current, and hopefully, final lineup.

Experience and age

Often misunderstood as a snob, rock icon Wolf Gemora actually exudes the kind of humility that commands respect. He is one of the moving forces behind the growing popularity of Lokomotiv. His experience and age, and a good number of loyal followers from his heyday with Wolfgang, led the band to amass an increasing fan base since the group's first performance.

After plans of his former band to break into the US market didn't materialize, Wolf joined Lokomotiv, with Americans James MacDonnel (who eventually left the group) and bassist Danny Gonzales. Guitarist David Aguirre, formerly of Razorback, and Wolfgang's vocalist, Basti Artadi, completed the lineup.

A year and a half later, Basti also left the band. The three remaining members, together with manager Ron Davis, immediately looked for a "wild frontman/singer" and advertised on the Internet. They were set to promote their album in the Philippines—and they didn't have a frontman!

Audition

A few weeks later, they found 21-year-old Ryan Hudson, who breathed new life—and sound—into the band. The young guy from Oklahoma impressed the trio—especially Wolf—during the audition and rehearsals.

"I was blown away," Wolf confesses. "He knew the songs very well, and when he sang, we said: 'There you go!'"

David used Danny's analogy when they finally found their guy: "We were looking for a soldier, not a mercenary." Ryan, with his witty remarks and "innocence," is that soldier.

For Danny, the band is his life: "We endured crummy jobs, and the only way we were able to do it was the knowledge that there was going to be a rehearsal at the end of the day!"

Collaborations

"RNRDT" was released in the US last year. "It's like a series of snapshots of where each member of the band was at the time," David describes the album. Its repertoire includes previous works of the members prior to joining Lokomotiv, as well as their collaborations as a band.

Serious discussions about their music don't escape Ryan's amusing remarks, though. "Have you heard of the band Air Supply?," he asks us. "If it wasn't for Air Supply, this album might have been my favorite."

The cut, "Ride with Me," is a crowd favorite during their live gigs. "It's not only Ryan's favorite; it has also become the band's theme song," Wolf declares. "If you want to know what Lokomotiv is, watch and hear us perform the song live."

The album has 10 cuts. And Ryan was given the tough task of promoting an album that has nothing of him in it—he came on board after the album has been recorded!

"The band was already scheduled to come here," he recalls. "There were gigs that were already booked here, so I knew what I was getting into."

Voice

If they had their way, the boys would have liked to have Ryan's voice on the album, but it was impossible to record it again! The soft-spoken Danny, however, assures that their second album will be out before the year ends.

David describes the music of Lokomotiv as edgy and sexy. The band intends to create a vibe that projects a positive output rather than the usual angst of rock music. He adds: "That is not to say that we won't have an angry song in our repertoire. We're just at a point where we want to celebrate the things in life that are good."

Regardless of their respective tastes and musical influences, Wolf explains that it's the music that really brings them together. He reasoned: "What has remained constant is our collective love for classic rock."

Sharon Cuneta, up close and personal

From page 11

niya ako, e di hindi siya magsa-stand-out *sa* brain *ko! Nasanay daw kasi ako sa mga taong nagbibigay ng* attention *sa akin. Ngek! Akala niya, KSP ako*—or worse, that I demanded special treatment wherever I went!

Personal life

"A few days later, my friend Arsi Baltazar, called me to say Kiko wanted to go out with me. Angeli (Valenciano) said the same thing. *Magulo ang* personal life *ko noon,* so my best friend advised, 'Go out with him *para* you're not sulking,' so I did.

We went to this Italian restaurant where all I had was a cappuccino. Then, we went to Shangri-La Makati's coffee shop, where I only ordered tea, then hot chocolate. He later told me *na okay pala ako, kasi* cheap *lang akong i-*date!" (laughs)

What struck her most about Kiko? Wasn't he intimidated by her celebrity and wealth? And what does a guy do to pursue a Sharon Cuneta?

Tabloids

She replies, "Kiko has never been the type to be bothered by my 'perceived' wealth or fame. (laughs) He was initially affected, though, by how some tabloids depicted him. He asked me to marry him a few months into the relationship, *at namanhikan na ang* parents *niya.*

"But, he chickened out a few weeks after *kasi daw,* he had some more 'adjusting' to do to my lifestyle—to my being in show business.

"I was so upset, *gusto ko siyang sakalin*! He knew I was not a 'private' citizen when he courted me, and it wasn't as if *hindi siya sanay na may artista sa pamilya, kasi ang bayaw niyang si* Gary (Valenciano) *at ang hipag niyang si* Maricel (Laxa) are also in show business!

FRANKIE and Miel have an "amazing" dad.

"By the time he was ready, *ako naman ang* busy! I was in the middle of filming 'Madrasta' when he put his foot down, because I kept stalling. He became my boyfriend on March 24, 1994, and we were married on April 28, 1996.

"Back then, I already knew we had the same dream of raising a family, and we shared the same values. I knew the relationship had a chance. After my first marriage (to Gabby Concepcion) broke up, I'd always say, '*Hindi ako nakipaghiwalay sa asawa para magwala.* We parted ways because *magkaiba ang aming paningin sa* marriage and family. It didn't mean he was evil, *hindi lang talaga kami magkasundo!*

"Now that I'm older, however, I'm more forgiving—and I take responsibility for what could have been my part in the failure of that relationship. But I never gave up on marriage—or the idea of it. I always knew I'd be ready to be a wife and mother again. You can't allow anyone who has caused you pain to make you feel defeated or less of a woman."

Balance

What has she learned from Kiko? She shares, "He brought balance to my life—it has become more stable and, well, 'normal.' And he's very prayerful. *Napapahiya ako palagi sa kanya,* because I keep forgetting to practice what I preach! I am sensitive and emotional by nature—I love too much, laugh too loudly, get hurt very deeply, and cry too easily. Then, when I start complaining, Kiko tells me that I'm always the first to remind people to count their blessings.

Another chance

"I have never known a more amazing father than Kiko—and my dad was amazing, huh! If I were given another chance to live, I'd want to be born as his child! Not that he isn't a good husband, because he is. You know how some people would walk an extra mile for their children? Kiko would walk an extra hundred more!"

But, even as Sharon extols the good fortune of living a charmed life and having Kiko for a husband, we're doubly sure the senator feels just as lucky for having found his better half in his Megawife!

Paolo Bediones puts entrepreneurial skills to good use

BEDIONES. Acknowledges temporary nature of show biz.

By Remy Umerez

THREE DAYS BEFORE HE turned 33 last March 17, Paolo Bediones reflected about his life so far—with pride and joy. He thanked friends from the press who have been supporting him for the past 11 years.

Paolo acknowledges the temporary nature of show business. He explains, *"Ilan lang ang kagaya nina* Sharon Cuneta, Vilma Santos *at* Aga Muhlach. *Wala akong* delusions of grandeur. You can't be popular forever."

Earnings

With the money he's saved from his earnings as a TV personality, Paolo is putting his entrepreneurial skills to good use. He is now the CEO of I/Tech Ph Solutions, which aims to hone and tap into Filipinos' business sense.

The TV show host believes that by expanding the capitalist base of the country, he can help improve the country's economy.

Book

Paolo feels honored that his efforts has been recognized in the book, "Go Negosyo," which names him as "one of the most promising entrepreneurs" in the country, alongside Vicky Belo, Ben Chan, Raul Concepcion, Larry Cruz. Gaita Fores, Budji Layug, Monique Lhuillier, Manny Pangilinan, Henry Sy and Bienvenido Tantoco.

From Paolo's experience as a businessman, he seeks to impart some lessons: Choose an enterprise not because of money, but because it's something you like.

Social entrepreneurs create an enterprise that does something good.

Hallmark

Leveraging on current resources is a hallmark of entrepreneurship.

And lastly, "real" entrepreneurs don't make the same mistake twice. In business, failures are avenues for learning new things.

Paolo, who's a voracious reader, continues to support his advocacy program, "One Shelf of Books," which aims to encourage young people to read.

Cannes official checks on state of local cinema

By Rica Arevalo

LAST MARCH 16, I HAD THE privilege of dining with Jeremy Segay, festival programmer of the Cannes Film Festival's Directors' Fortnight, at the Old Manila Café, along with other young filmmakers. The get-together turned into a discussion about current trends in Philippine cinema.

We asked Segay why he visited Manila. He readily answered: "I wanted to visit different countries whose films are less accessible to us. It has been four years since I came here. I wanted to check the current situation of filmmaking. I wanted to meet new directors."

I informed him that the local films that click at the box office are horror flicks, teen romances and gay-themed films. The filmmakers present that night were alternative directors who did well in festivals abroad, but whose movies didn't make much of an impact in the local box office.

He asked, "Why don't you try to do films that are more audience-friendly? You have to find your audience!"

He told me that he discovered something during his short stay here. He shared: "The works of young filmmakers are subsidized by the likes of Cinemalaya and CinemaOne. In other Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia or Indonesia, there's no such thing. It's a great opportunity for filmmakers, so your situation isn't all that bad."

Programmers

How do we make Filipino films popular on the world cinema circuit? He answered: "Many countries publish an annual book containing all the films released in a particular film year—something like that would help make festival programmers aware of your output."

He happily shared this positive development: "A Filipino movie ('Ang Pagdadalaga ni Maximo Oliveros') will be released in France next month. It's been sometime since a Filipino film has been shown in French theaters."

Another question posed to Segay that night: Will we see a *Pinoy* film at this year's Cannes film fest? He smiled and said: "Who knows? It depends on what I'll see here. I'm optimistic about that possibility, because the Filipino movies shown in Pusan and Rotterdam were well-received."

Entries

Official selections of the Cannes Film Festival include competition films, Un Certain Regard, noncompetition entries for the Directors' Fortnight (chosen by the Society of Film Directors), international critics' week (selected by the Association of Film Critics), and the Film Market.

SEGAY (CENTER, WITH FILMMAKERS ADOLF ALIX, LEFT, AND EMMAN DELA CRUZ). "Make films that are more audience-friendly."

Romantic HONG KONG

It's not difficult to fall for the charms of Hong Kong. The city's urban oasis, nature escapes, rich culture, and endless charm call to mind a romance that entices the sensual traveler. Indulge yourself in Hong Kong on a romantic getaway with your loved one, which is nothing short of beautiful, charming and breathtaking.

Whatever the occasion, be it an anniversary, honeymoon or simply a romantic adventure, Hong Kong provides the perfect backdrop for an enchanting retreat. Marvel at Hong Kong's stunning skyline as it transforms from an amazing view in the day to a spectacular burst of light at night. Experience Hong Kong's urban oasis famed for its unparalleled vibrancy and sense of excitement. Indulge in its plethora of shopping destinations from an abundance of opulent choices to traditional souvenirs. Pamper yourself with Hong Kong's romantic retreats and unrivaled Chinese dining delights that make a remarkable gastronomic experience.

Venture off to an adventurous escape in Hong Kong's great outdoors with an island excursion or explore its many hiking trails and hidden treasures. Hop on the iconic Star Ferry, take a Duk Ling ride at the Harbour or climb aboard the antique tram for an unforgettable journey.

Hong Kong offers limitless choices that showcase the city's unique mix of old-world charm and modern sophistication. With its endless romantic charm and ideal setting, you won't get enough of Romantic Hong Kong.

Suggested Romantic Hong Kong 5-day Itinerary

DAY ONE

Have morning tea and dim sum, Hong Kong style, at a Chinese restaurant. Take a leisurely ride to the Peak via the Peak Tram and marvel at the breathtaking 360-dergee view atop the Peak Tower. Visit the "famous home of the famous" – Madame Tussauds Wax Museum - and take photos with the rich and famous. Have a romantic candlelit dinner at The Peak's elegant restaurants that provides a scenic backdrop of the famous Hong Kong skyline.

DAY TWO

Get pampered with a luxurious spa treatment to gear up for an exciting day ahead with your loved one. Explore the colonial era buildings around Central and take a leisurely ride up on the Mid-Levels escalator from Central to Hollywood Road and Upper Lascar Row to go through antique shops with unique treasures and memorabilia. Grab a bite in SoHo then climb aboard an authentic Chinese Junk – 'Duk Ling – and cruise around Victoria Harbour. As darkness fall, head to Lan Kwai Fong and chill out at the numerous trendy night entertainment outlets.

DAY THREE

Indulge in a romantic breakfast in bed. Head for Wong Tai Sin to see what the future holds (especially on love and marriage). Then venture off to Stanley where you can choose whether to shop, visit a pub or stroll along the beach. Head back down to Tsim Sha Tsui to catch the spectacular Symphony of Lights show and cap off the evening with a dinner by the Harbourfront Promenade.

DAY FOUR

Take on the "Journey of Enlightenment" at Lantau Island. It starts with a stunning cable car ride on the Ngong Ping 360 Skyrail to visit the Ngong Ping Village, the Wisdom Path, Po Lin Monastery and the Giant Buddha. No visit to Lantau is complete without the magic of Hong Kong Disneyland. Enjoy the exciting theme park rides, a sumptuous dinner and watch the spectacular fireworks light up the sky.

DAY FIVE

Stroll along the Avenue of Stars to see Hong Kong's tribute to past and present screen stars. Take a Star Ferry ride to Lamma Island for a delightful seafood lunch, al fresco, by the sea. Head back to the city and shop around Causeway Bay for matching 'his and hers' memorabilia before preparing to depart in the evening.

For more information, please visit DiscoverHongKong.com.

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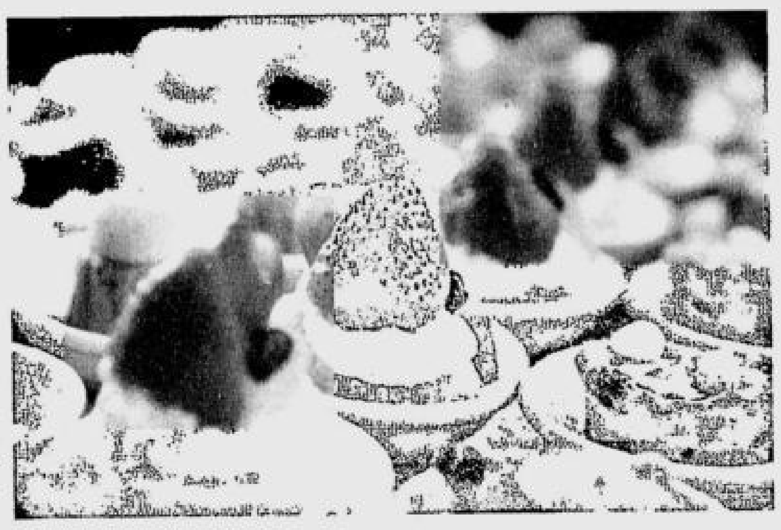
YOUR FIVE SENSES PLAY AN IMPORTANT role in your daily life. You touch, you hear, you see, you taste and you smell, in order to allow your body to function. Every moment, we use at least one of our five senses. Isn't it wonderful when you awake all these senses? At Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila this summer, you're invited to indulge all your senses.



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Smell the aroma and zest of excellently prepared Cantonese cuisine at Xin Tian Di Chinese restaurant. Xin Tian Di, when translated into English, means 'New Heaven & Earth'. When dining here, you will discover a new meaning to traditional Chinese food.

Hear the music and the melodies. At barOne, dusk ushers in the music you need to unwind and relax. While savoring your favorite drink, enjoy live band entertainment, from Monday through Saturday, to suit your every mood.

But ultimately, the most sensual of the senses is the sense of touch. Nothing is more calming and soothing than a full-body Mind and Body Harmony Massage from Suriya Spa.

So come to Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, your place in Ortigas - the place to indulge all your senses - and feel absolutely revitalized! An overnight stay begins at only P3,900++ per night, including full buffet breakfast for two persons the morning after. The room rate is valid until Aug. 30, subject to availability and hotel terms and conditions.

For more information on local summer packages, call Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila at 633-7222.

Get hooked on Oasis Country Resort's 'fishtacular' indulgence

SOMETHING FISHY IS RISING FROM THE depths of the sea this March, and Oasis Country Resort, your ideal summer hideaway in the North, guarantees that it is not an ordinary fish tale!

Aquatic aromas speak of the divine goodness in every bite of the hotel's Oriental pride, the Sushi Platter. Prepared with utmost skill by reliable and authentic Japanese cuisine masters, the fresh variety of dishes reflects the East's culinary ingenuity when it comes to classic food presentation. Vacationers out for adventure will surely love exploring and experiencing a delightful culture shock as they taste the supreme oishi allure of the Sushi Platter's marine masterpieces, such as the Mixed Sushi, Shake Kabutoni, and Tuna and Salmon Sashimis.

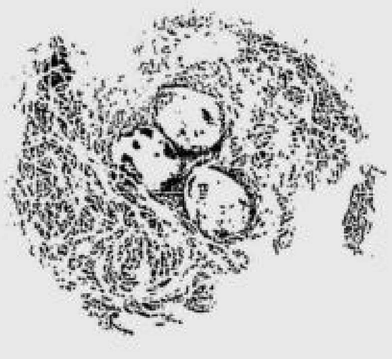
Also there to captivate diners are the tempting Mixed Tempura (an assorted savory of seafood favorites such as tuna and prawn), Tofu Steak (all-time favorite tofu cooked till crisp and served with rich mushroom sauce), and Nasu Abura Itame (eggplant recipe with a surprising cultural twist).

After that delicious food quest, diners can then get their endless kampai session with authentic sake (rice wine), the perfect beverage for that unforgettable summer toast.

Celebrate a lavish seafood adventure by sampling these Oriental treats at Oasis Country Resort! For inquiries and reservations, you may drop by at the hotel in Sevilla, San Fernando, La Union, or dial (632) 725-5443, 725-5096, (072) 242-5621 loc. 238/239, or fax at (072)242-5631. Or log on to www.oasiscountryresort.com.

Hop to Astoria Plaza this Easter!

COME OUT OF YOUR SHELL AND HOP AWAY to celebrate Easter with the entire family at Astoria Plaza. They've thought of everything to amuse the young and the young-at-heart in a place where you can whisk your trouble away and celebrate the sweet fullness of life.



From April 5-9, book two nights in a 1-bedroom suite for only P7,250 net per night and P11,150 net per night for a 2-bedroom suite and enjoy the 3rd night for free (extra night is convertible to gift certificate). So what are you waiting for? Enjoy this wonderful and colorful Easter package only at Astoria Plaza. Two complimentary passes to the Easter Sunday party, two ride-all-you-can tickets and two carousel passes at the Enchanted Kingdom will come in handy so it's certainly more than you can ask for.

On April 8 at 2 p.m., put on your Easter Best and get loads of thrill and egg-citement with the entire family at Astoria Plaza's Amazing Egg Race. Participate in festivities to be held at the Hampton Room for only P450++. The celebration features a hearty merienda buffet, cotton candy and popcorn carts for kids.

Astoria Plaza is ideally located at #15 J. Escriva Drive (formerly Amber Ave.) Ortigas Business District, Pasig City. For inquiries and reservations, please call 687-1111. E-mail: sales@astoriaplaza.com Website: www.astoriaplaza.com.

Fuego Hotels gears up for the summer season

FUEGO HOTELS & PROPERTIES MANAGEMENT Corporation, considered as one of the country's most dynamic management companies, all gears up for the summer season with the expected influx of foreign and domestic travelers in the country.

Currently, Fuego Hotels proudly manages the new and luxurious Taal Vista Hotel in Tagaytay, the world-renowned Pearl Farm Beach Resort in the beautiful island of Samal in Davao, and the ultra exclusive (members-only) residential resort communities of Club Punta Fuego Inc - Peninsula de Punta Fuego and Terrazas de Punta Fuego.

Taal Vista Hotel has a very strong following amongst the leisure market with its various lifestyle amenities and offerings for families. The hotel is also very strong in corporate accounts due to its proximity to Metro Manila and the industrial areas of the Calabarzon region. The new Taal Vista Hotel has been the venue of choice for corporate functions and events, fast becoming a convention destination in the area with its world-class banqueting facilities. Because of all of these positive developments, the new Taal Vista Hotel is expanding for an additional 133 rooms, a 1000-seater ballroom and 6 additional function rooms to accommodate the growing demand for its services. Target completion is on October 2008.

This summer, Pearl Farm Beach Resort offers travelers more reasons to visit this tiny piece of paradise with its wide array of leisure packages and services. Recently, the resort launched the Davao Marina Wharf which has a four guest rooms to accommodate their increasing clientele of leisure travelers, both local and foreign.

Meanwhile, now that the summer season is fast approaching, the exclusive Club Punta Fuego is now more popular than ever amongst its esteemed members and their families. The members have more reasons to enjoy their privileges with the newest additions to its already superb facilities. The Club recently opened the Punta Fuego Yacht Club with floating berths and a clubhouse bar featuring a 180-degree view of the sea perfect for anything that involves sailboats. Aside from this, the Club recently launched a new food outlet, Il Jardineto, a gourmet Italian restaurant at the Lower Beach Club which is fast becoming a place for members to converge and spend quality time with family and friends. The Terrazas beach club is also a popular area where members spend fun under the sun with its beautiful and child-friendly beachfront.

For more information about the many exciting offerings of Fuego Hotels' managed and operated properties for the summer season, call 750-1999/ 750-1895/ 750-1897 or e-mail: guests@fuegohotels.com. Visit www.fuegohotels.com.

Mandarin Oriental's Easter Sunday extravaganza

MANDARIN ORIENTAL, MANILA GEARS UP for an enchanting and magical "Fairytales & Fantasy" Easter Sunday egg hunt and celebration, on April 8 from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, at the ballroom. Children of all ages will be treated to an ultra fun and exciting, dreamlike experience, filled with a host of fairytale charm and fascinating activities that will surely leave kids in delightful amazement.

Kids are in for more thrilling surprises, as Mandarin Oriental's ballroom is veritably transformed into a fairytale-inspired forest tunnel complete with a lifesized-backdrop of a fantasy-like castle fit for young princes and princesses.

Held in collaboration with Innove Communications, Barbie, Hot Wheels, Uno, M&M's, Globe Platinum, Enchanted Kingdom, Jump, Bounce 'N Play Interactive Inflatables, and Events by Gigi Bautista, the Fairytales & Fantasy Easter Sunday extravaganza promises overnight accommodations for two with breakfast at Mandarin Oriental, Manila and a host of other wonderful gifts and prizes for the egg hunt winners. Two grand egg hunts await kids age one to five years old (toddler category), and six to twelve years old (junior category).

Easter egg hunt tickets are priced at P500 nett per child, inclusive of a loot bag and Easter basket; and at P300 nett per accompanying adult. A complimentary egg hunt ticket awaits each diner who partakes of special Easter Sunday lunch buffets at Tin Hau at P820+++ and P470+++, and Paseo Uno at P1,030+++ and P550+++, for adults and children age 2 to 12 years old respectively. Children below two years old dine for free when accompanied by paying adults, but are not entitled to complimentary egg hunt tickets.

For a luxurious summer refuge, avail of weekend room packages for local residents from March 30 to April 8. The packages include two complimentary Easter egg hunt tickets per room, per stay for the Easter Sunday event on April 8, replete with additional benefits. Advance reservation is required.

For enquiries, call 750-8888 extension 2411/2412 (Paseo Uno); 2422/2424 (Tin Hau); 2417/2418 (Captain's Bar); and 2303 to 2307 (room reservations).

IN THIS ISSUE
■ 'SPIDER-MAN' LEADS
summer of sequels /J4

SATURDAY *Special*

"BEAUTY AND THE BEAST." Animated fable brought tunefully to life.

Insatiable appetite for Disney musicals noted

NEW YORK—CRISTINA SOLER AND HER daughter jostle with other adults and families in sub-zero temperatures in a crush outside a theater on 42nd Street, but they show no signs of frustration.

Lining up for the recently opened Broadway musical, "Mary Poppins," Soler recalls seeing the 1964 Disney movie as a child and predicts she might cry during the show. Her daughter Lara, 11, adds, "It was my No. 1 choice!"

Popularity

The mother-and-daughter duo are among the growing global audience—drawn by the popularity of the Walt Disney films—now watching the media giant's adapted theatrical musicals.

The number of Disney musicals on New York's Broadway has doubled to four in the past year, and the number of productions opening in other cities has also increased.

"It's unprecedented!," said Thomas Schumacher, president of Disney Theatrical Productions, which will open "The Lion King" in Johannesburg and Paris, and "Tarzan" in Holland, this year.

Comeback

Disney has headed the comeback of Times Square and 42nd Street and scored a stream of hits for a decade. When one show closes, another opens. "Beauty and the Beast" closes in July, but it will be replaced by "The Little Mermaid" at the end of the year.

"Tarzan" and "Mary Poppins" both opened on Broadway last year, resulting in an increase of Disney's Broadway revenues by 42 percent, or $39 million, to a total of $131 million, according to Disney.

The current worldwide take for "The Lion King," its most successful musical, is more than $2 billion, while "Beauty and the Beast," which will continue to play in other cities after its Broadway close, has earned $1.4 billion.

Spectacular

Broadway observers and Disney executives say the corporate backing behind the spectacular, kid-friendly productions and the success of the movies the musicals are adapted from ensure a longer run than many other shows regardless of critical acclaim.

But, where Disney has succeeded on Broadway, others have failed. Its rival, Warner Bros., challenged Disney's opening of "Tarzan" last year with its Broadway foray, the Elton John musical, "Lestat."

While Tarzan received mixed reviews (and continues its run on Broadway), "Lestat" flopped and closed within two months.

Familiar

The advantage of Disney's musicals is a guaranteed audience already familiar with the music and story, as well as the backing of a large company that can absorb any negative word of mouth.

Others have criticized Disney for its lack of originality, and for pushing out independent producers. "I think Disney is beginning to cannibalize itself on Broadway—they are beginning to eat into their own market now," said New York drama writer Michael Riedel, noting "Beauty" was closing to make way for "The Little Mermaid."

Disney says it has other ideas, including touring the hit television film, "High School Musical," converted into a musical last year. *Reuters*

"TARZAN." Mixed reviews.

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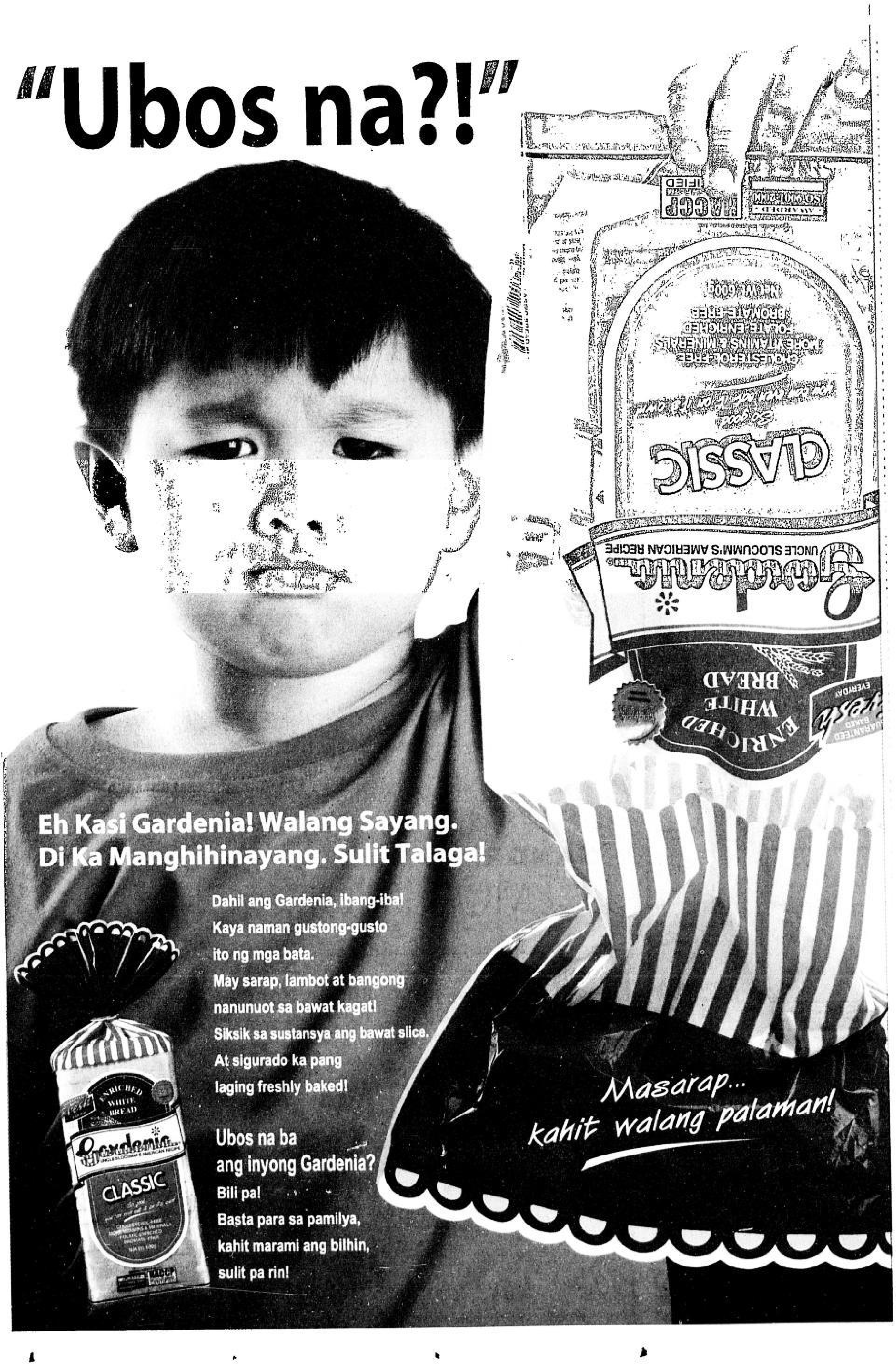

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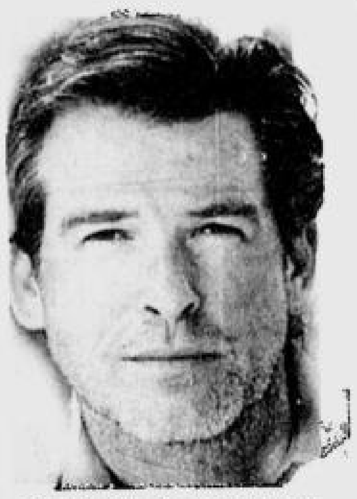
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US stars weigh in on important issues

By Nestor U. Torre

IN THE PHILIPPINES, STARS are hired by political candidates to draw crowds to their rallies. In the United States and some other countries, show biz luminaries go beyond mere crowd-drawing and try to influence candidates' political platforms, as well.

What are the stars thinking about in terms of political priorities for the US polls? Here's an eye-opening sampler:

Matthew McConaughey: "We need to create incentives and hope for our children through better parenting and education. Reestablish good work ethic in the computer age by rewarding good service and testing products, and stop the disease that weakens us all—lies."

Barbra Streisand: "Our environmental situation is spinning our of control. Either we drastically change our destructive patterns of interaction with our planet, or we will forever ruin the chances of its survival, and ours as well."

James Woods: "Return the country to the meritocracy it was conceived to be, supporting educational opportunities for all rather than rewarding failure."

Michael Douglas: "Counteract the threat of nuclear annihilation. Unknown to many, there are still more than 30,000 nuclear devices in existence today, and fewer than 100 could destroy civilization. We should know how all presidential candidates stand on this."

Ignorance

Hector Elizondo: "Education. Ignorance is not bliss—it is oblivion. And determined ignorance is the hastiest kind of oblivion."

Rob Reiner: "The weakening of our family structure. We are not meeting the needs of our children. Parents need to become more involved, and society needs to help provide investments in health care, quality child care, and parent education."

Alicia Silverstone: "Society's basic lack of respect for the lives of all living creatures. If we started treating animals with respect, we'd undoubtedly treat each other better."

Pierce Brosnan: "We need to reverse the negative environmental impacts we are inflicting. We cannot continually borrow against our children's and grandchildren's future."

Kevin Bacon: "The environment. Global warming, dying oceans, air pollution and overpopulation are not 'future issues,' but problems that must be addressed now."

Health menace

Camryn Manheim: "Health care and gun control. Guns are the No. 1 health menace. I won't vote for anyone who doesn't support strong gun control."

Michael Boatman: "Overcoming violence. If we don't treat each other as we would like to be treated, we can't overcome other issues. People's readiness to attack their fellow man is the most pressing political and social issue we should address."

Joshua Malina: "Campaign finance reform. Instead of the best and the brightest, the voting public is too often treated to the moneyed and mediocre."

—Don't you wish more of our local stars could be as similarly involved and engaged?

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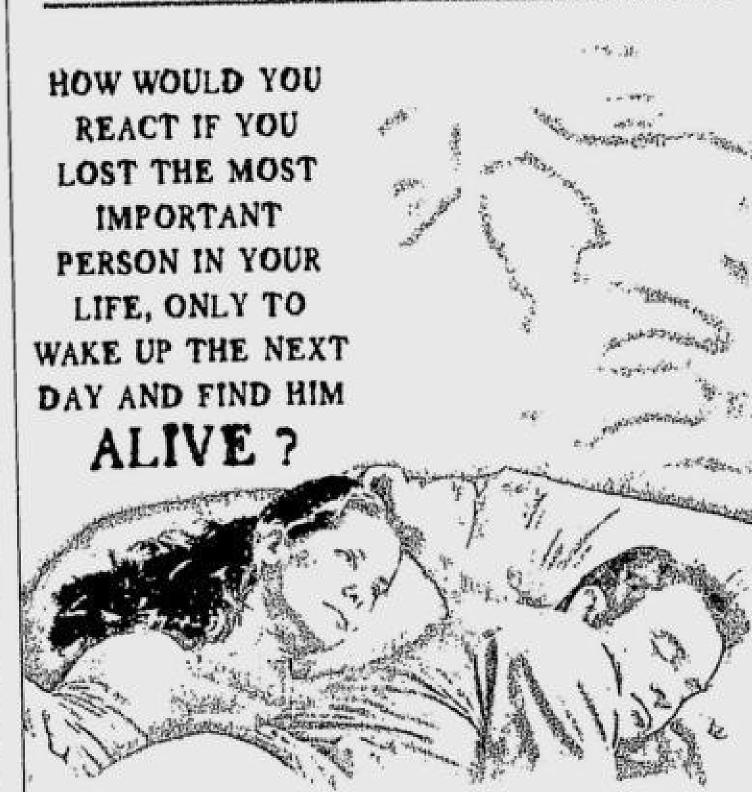


SANDRA BULLOCK
PREMONITION

Fil-Am dance champ goes for third victory

CHERYL BURKE, TWO-TIME CHAMPION ON ABC's "Dancing With the Stars," says she doesn't feel any pressure to bring home another disco-ball trophy as the show's fourth season began recently.

Burke, who won with celebrity partners, Drew Lachey and Emmitt Smith, tells People magazine: "I don't think it's pressure. Even after winning with Drew in the second season, it was never about, 'Oh, I have to win again!'"

Partner

"It's about who I'm dancing with and making my partner the best dancer he can possibly be," the 22-year-old professional dancer explains.

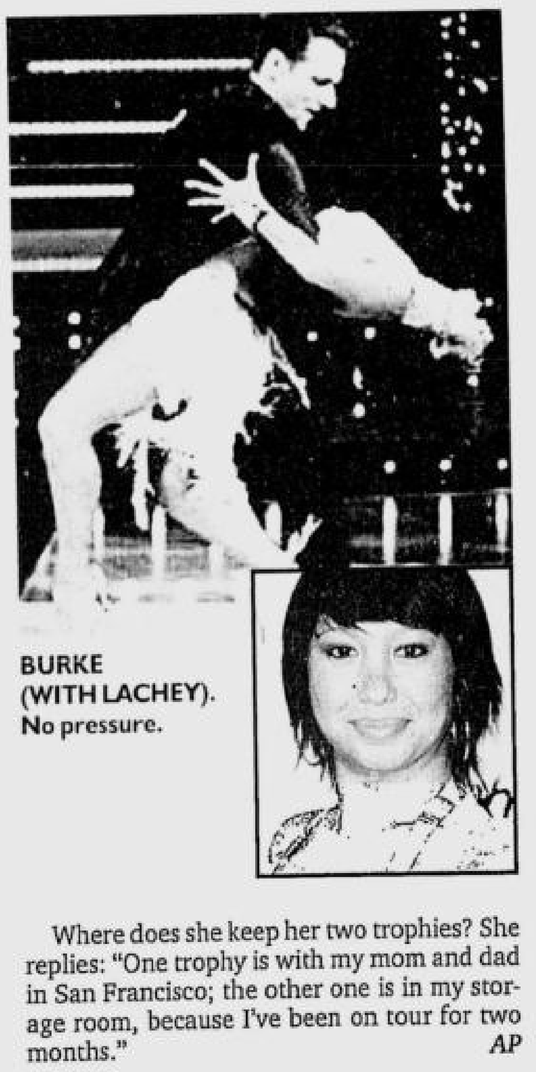
Her new partner is "Beverly Hills 90210's" Ian Ziering. Burke says Ziering is a fast learner who is quick with choreography, but gets easily frustrated because he's a perfectionist.

"He can really be hard on himself," she tells us. "So, I tell him, 'Take a deep breath, and let's try again.'"

Other celebrities

Other celebrities appearing on the show are Apolo Anton Ohno, Laila Ali, Clyde Drexler, John Ratzenberger, Heather Mills, Billy Ray Cyrus, Joey Fatone, Shandi Finnessey, Leeza Gibbons and Paulina Porizkova.

This season, viewers get two weeks of dance performances before sending a celebrity home. Burke, who is dating actor Matthew Lawrence (brother Joey competed in Season Three), shares: "To be known for a skill you've worked on your entire life is an amazing feeling!"


BURKE (WITH LACHEY). No pressure.

Where does she keep her two trophies? She replies: "One trophy is with my mom and dad in San Francisco; the other one is in my storage room, because I've been on tour for two months." *AP*

Tim McGraw looks beyond music

NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE—COUNTRY singer Tim McGraw once sang about all the things he planned to do later in life.

In "My Next 30 Years," he vowed to cry a little less, laugh a little more, raise a family, and hang out with his wife.

That modest list did not include becoming a movie star, getting elected to public office, or being inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame—but maybe it should have!

11th album

The 39-year-old singer, who is set to release his 11th album, "Let It Go," has become one of the most successful stars of his generation: His 26 No. 1 hits easily surpass those racked up by Kenny Chesney, Toby Keith, Shania Twain and Garth Brooks.

But, he has branched out into acting with a few well-received film roles—and he's even talking about running for office someday.

It's a long way from the early '90s, when the Louisiana native was one in a parade of look-alike "hat acts" that emerged after Brooks.

Anthems

McGraw's first success came in 1994 with "Indian Outlaw," a goofy novelty song that some radio stations refused to play, because it was offensive to American Indians. It kicked off a string of lighthearted anthems, such as "Down on the Farm," "I Like It, I Love It," and "Something Like That."

The singer could also be maudlin. The ballad, "Don't Take the Girl," was a weepy tale of young love torn apart. But, it became his first No. 1 hit on the country charts that helped cement his image as a ruggedly good looking guy with a sensitive side—a perfect fit for the genre's large female demographic. *AP*

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MTRCB Rating: PG13
REGULAR Showing: April 18

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FOUR GUYS FROM THE SUBURBS HIT THE ROAD... AND THE ROAD HIT BACK.
WILD HOGS

BLANCHETT. Starred in three Oscar-caliber films—"Babel," "The Good German," and "Notes on a Scandal."

BLANCHETT likes to play villains

PLAYING A NAZI collaborator in Steven Soderbergh's post-war noir thriller, "The Good German," has whetted Cate Blanchett's appetite for more villainous roles.

"I got my taste of playing a baddie in 'The Good German,'" the Australian actress told Reuters. "Now, I'd like to play an out and out villain."

Tragic character

Blanchett, 37, plays the tragic character Lena Brandt opposite George Clooney and Tobey Maguire in Soderbergh's black-and-white film of betrayal in bombed-out 1945 Berlin.

Her character helps the Nazis during the war to avoid deportation, then is forced into prostitution to survive once the fighting ends, as the victorious Russians and Americans take control of the German capital.

"She's a noir heroine who is elusive, dangerous and untrustworthy," Blanchett explained. "It's easy to sit back and say we would never have done that," she said, referring to Lena's collaboration.

"We all hope we would never have done that. It is reprehensible. But you never know what you're going to do," she added.

This year, Blanchett has starred in three films released in time for Oscar season—"The Good German," "Babel" (with Brad Pitt), and "Notes on a Scandal," with Judi Dench, for which she won an Academy Award nomination.

Eventual winner

She was up against four relative unknowns for best supporting actress, including two of her "Babel" co-stars and 10-year-old Abigail Breslin of "Little Miss Sunshine" and eventaul winner, Jennifer Hudson of "Dreamgirls."

"One could say that if you already have an Academy Award it's a bit greedy to expect any more," said Blanchett, who won an Oscar two years ago for her portrayal of Katharine Hepburn in Martin Scorsese's "The Aviator."

After working flat-out for the past decade to emerge as one of Hollywood's most respected and versatile actresses, Blanchett, a mother of two, plans to take it down a notch.

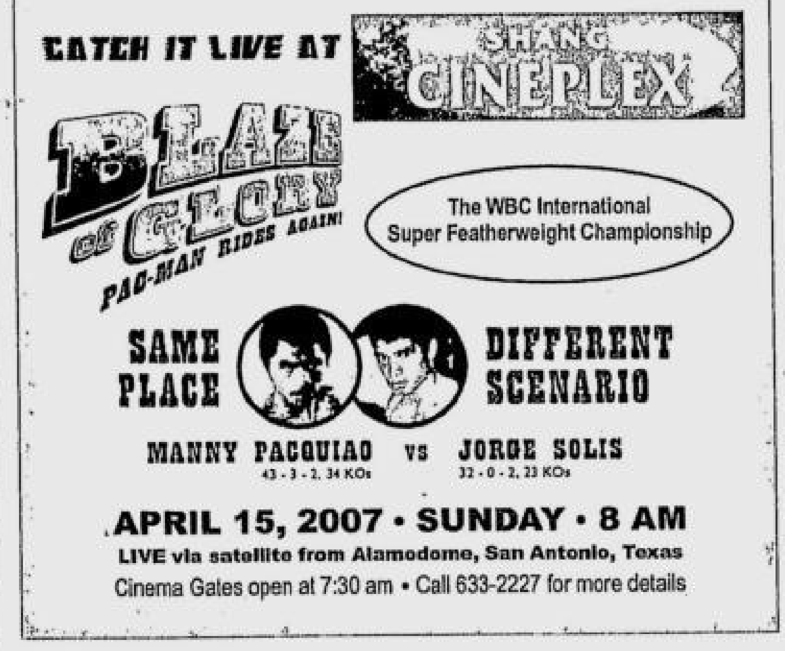
Playwright

She will move back to Australia to oversee The Sydney Theater Company next year with her husband, playwright Andrew Upton.

While in that role, she has said she will spend only three months per year making films.

"Hopefully, I'll still be working in the film industry, but we'll be doing a lot of theater," she shared. "That is going to be an enormous development!"

Reuters



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12:20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00
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1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 ROCKY BALBOA MTRCB PG-13
12:10, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
4 PREMONITION MTRCB PG-13 2.30, 5:00
300 MTRCB R-13 7:10, 10:00
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May 4, 2007 | HALE | 8:00 PM
May 18, 2007 | CHRISTIAN BAUTISTA | 8:00 PM
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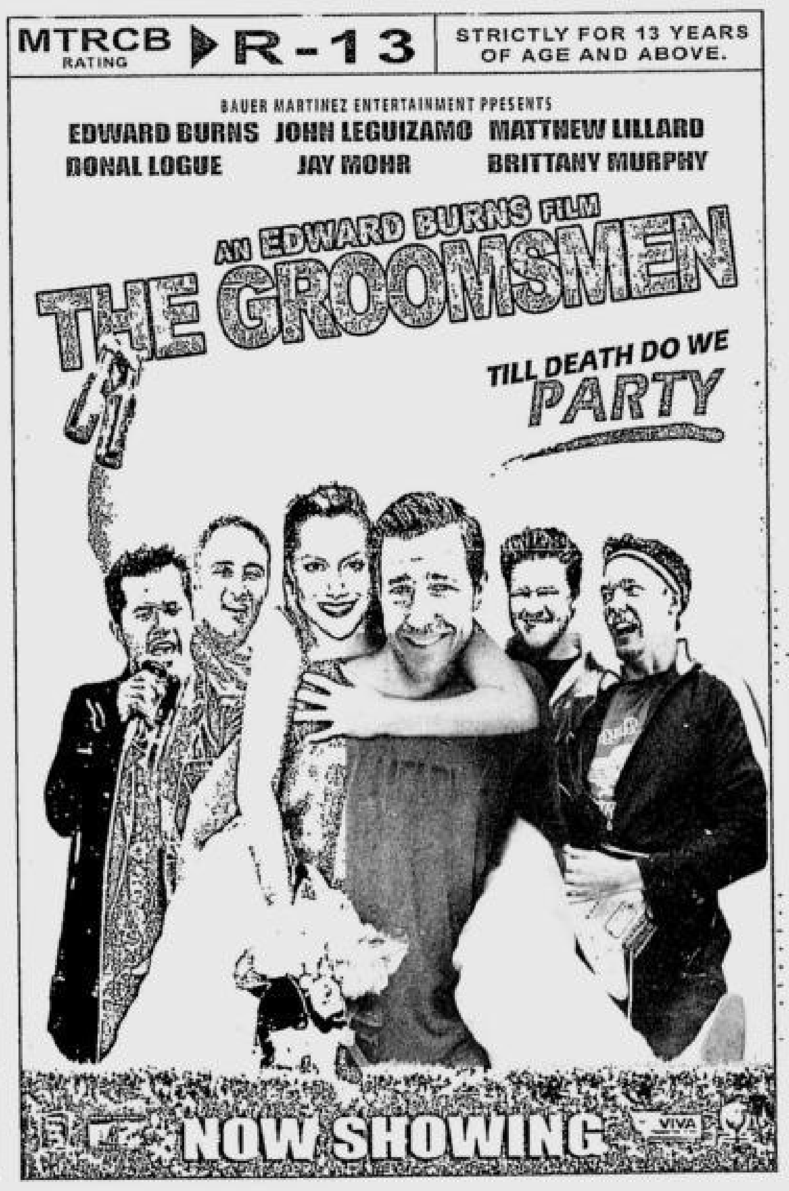

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TILL DEATH DO WE PARTY
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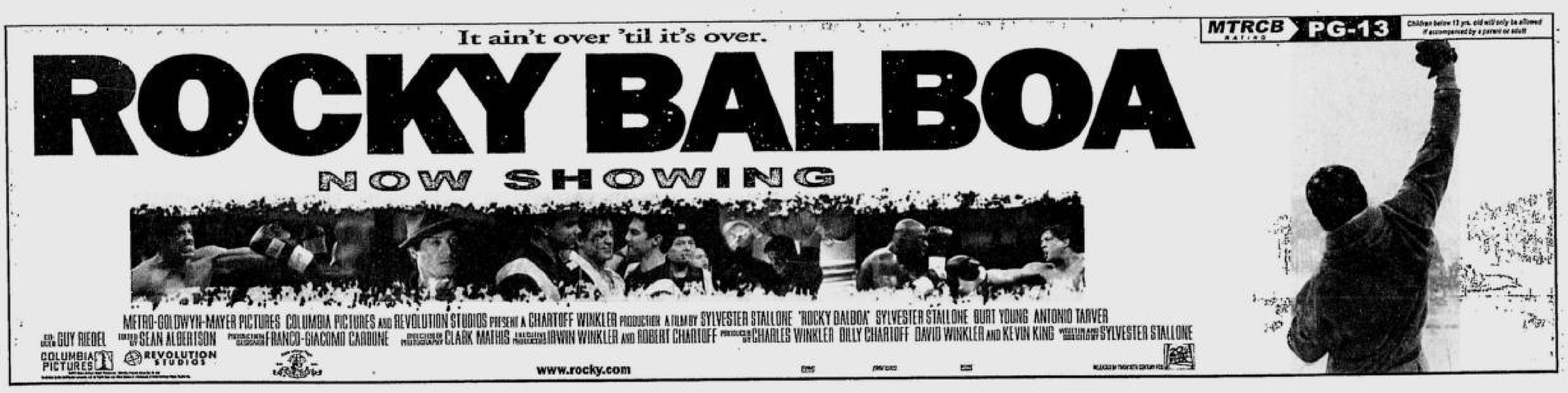

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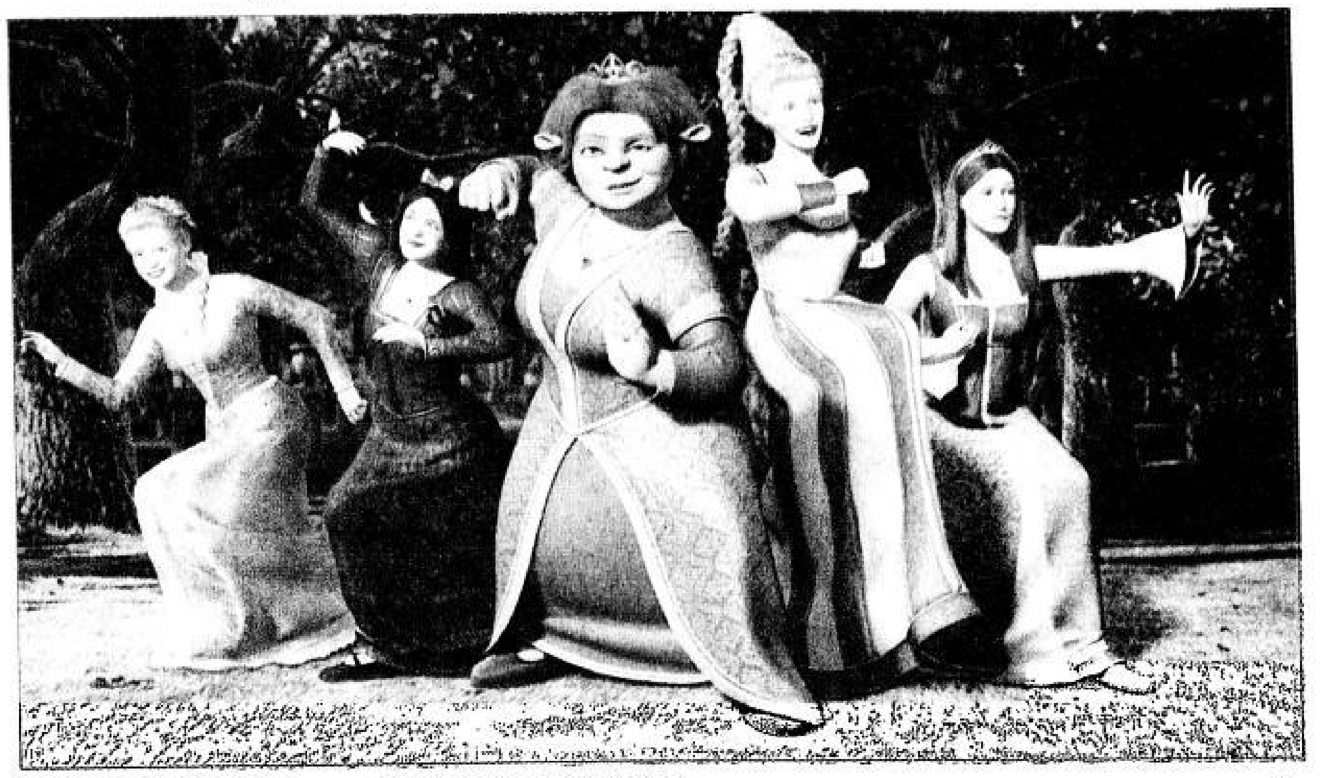
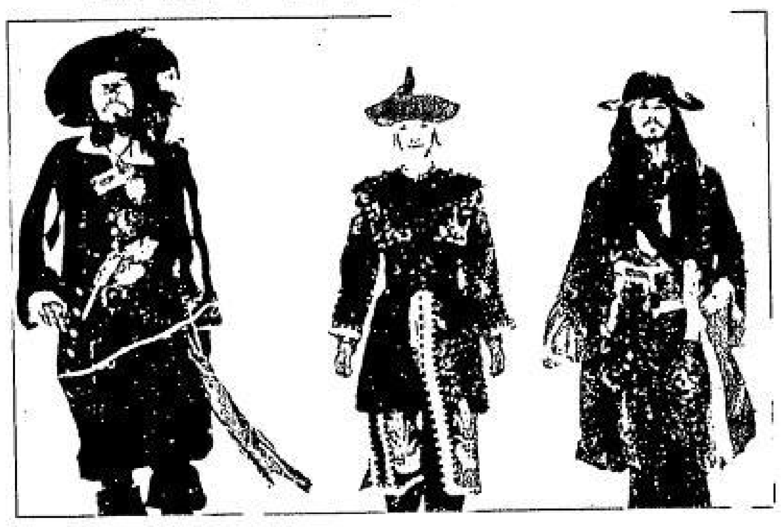


"SHREK THE THIRD." Does good luck really come in threes? AP

'Spider-Man,' 'Shrek' lead summer of sequels



"PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN: AT WORLD'S END." Disney's florid bunch is back! AP

LOS ANGELES—GET READY FOR THE SUMmer of sequels: Starting with Sony's "Spider-Man 3," set to open on May 4, and ending with New Line's "Rush Hour 3," slated for Aug. 10, the schedule is stacked with high-profile releases that are expected to fill theaters and get cash registers cranking.

"Lines beget lines," says Chuck Viane, Disney's domestic distribution president. "You get people seeing the trailers for the fall movies, and one thing triggers another. That's the great thing about the film business: When we're on a roll, there's a snowball effect."

Expectations

If the summer of 2007 lives up to expectations, it could turn out to be the biggest in box-office history, shattering the record held by the summer of 2004, when 557.4 million admissions generated $3.5 billion in revenue during the 15-week period between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

Among the other films that are expected to get the record mojo going: Paramount-DreamWorks' "Shrek the Third"; Disney's "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End"; Warner Bros.' "Ocean's Thirteen," and Sony's "Surf's Up"; Fox's "Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer," and Universal's "Evan Almighty."

The hit parade continues with Disney-Pixar's "Ratatouille" on June 29, Paramount's "Transformers" on July 4, Warner Bros.' "Harry Potter & the Order of the Phoenix," New Line's "Hairspray" on July 20, and Fox's "The Simpsons Movie" on July 27.

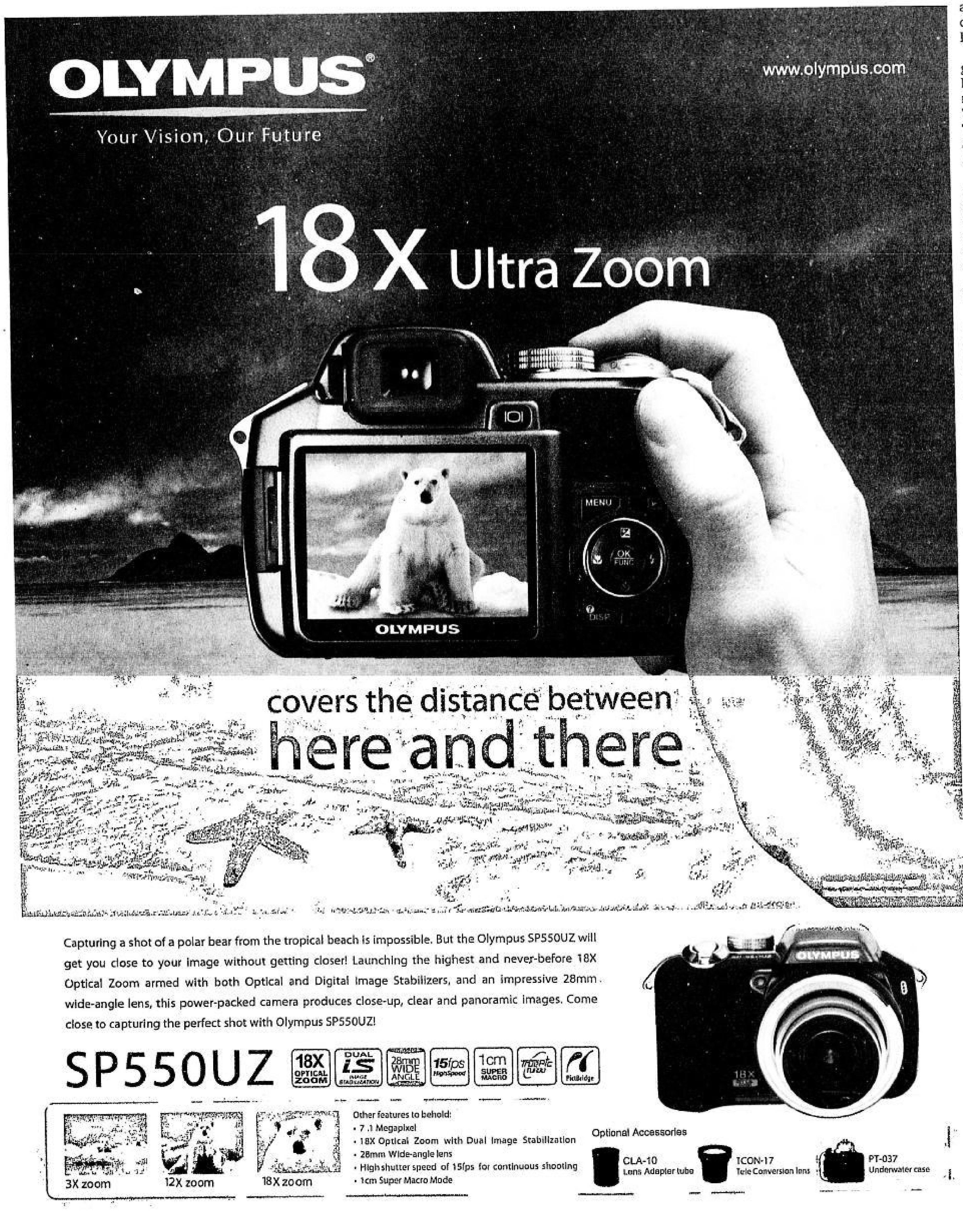
Shelf life

Each studio has a couple of potential summer blockbusters, but could they be too much of a good thing? In the past, there has been more "breathing room" between films, a studio executive posits, wondering if the titles will step on each other's shelf life. "It will be interesting to see if this is a summer where we open big for a week, then go away quickly."

But, while studios might fret about the fate of individual films, the sheer number of big films opening seems to make it a no-lose situation for theater owners: "This is a cyclical business that's dependent on product," says Mike Campbell, CEO of Regal Entertainment Group. "We had a good year last year, and I think the lineup this year looks very strong."

According to the Motion Picture Association of America, US box-office revenue rose 5.5 percent to $9.49 billion in 2006, reversing two years of decline that had some observers wondering if the cinema experience was being displaced by home theaters, TiVo and video games. *Reuters*

MAGUIRE. Peter Parker faces his dark side in latest installment.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New talents gear up for stardom

KLASS. Starts hosting "The Screening Room" today.

By Nestor U. Torre

CNN INTERNATIONAL'S newest presenter, Myleene Klass, hosts the monthly film show, "The Screening Room," which debuts today at 3:30 and 9:30 p.m. Myleene lives in London, but she was born in Norfolk to a Filipino-Chinese mother, Magdalena, and an Australian-English father, Oscar.

A classically trained pianist, Myleene studied at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Royal Academy of Music. She also plays the harp and violin.

Pop album

She's had both a million-selling pop album with the band Hear'Say, and another million-selling solo classical album, "Moving On."

She was a chorus member in the musical, "Miss Saigon," on London's West End. After competing on the reality TV show, "I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here," she became the Internet's third most searched-for celebrity in the world. And she has sung back-up vocals for both K.D. Lang and Robbie Williams.

Get to know Myleene more by viewing "The Screening Room" on CNN today.

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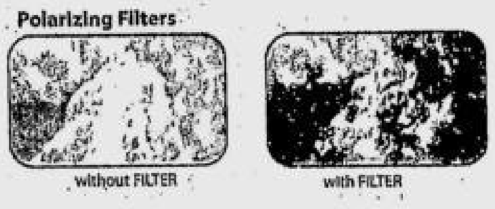
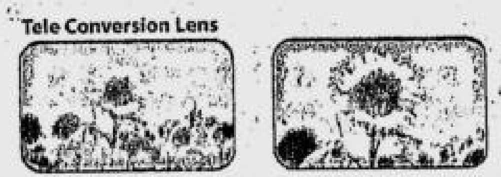
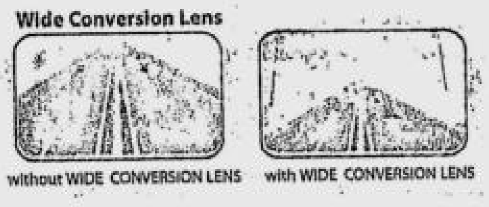

without FILTER
with FILTER

Tele Conversion Lens


without TELE CONVERSION LENS
with TELE CONVERSION LENS

Wide Conversion Lens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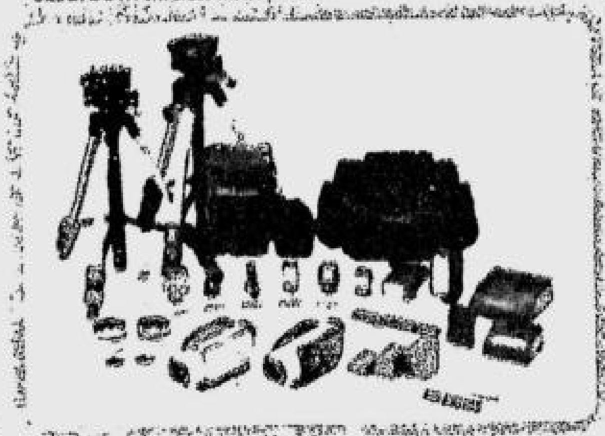

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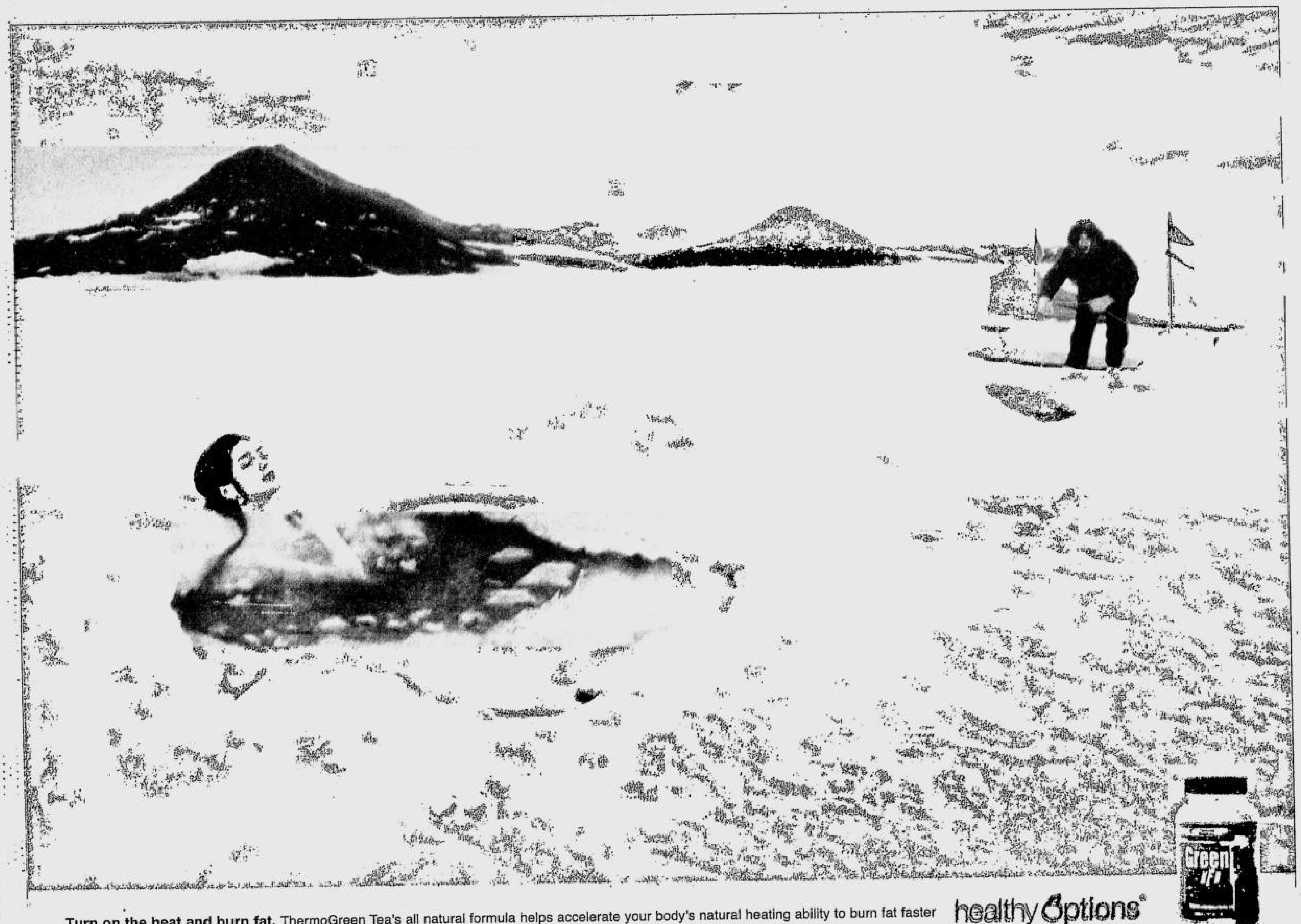

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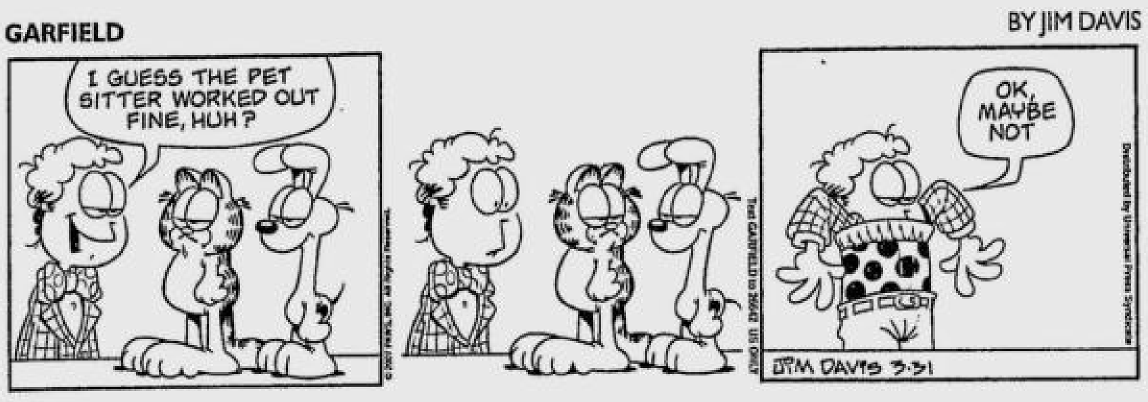
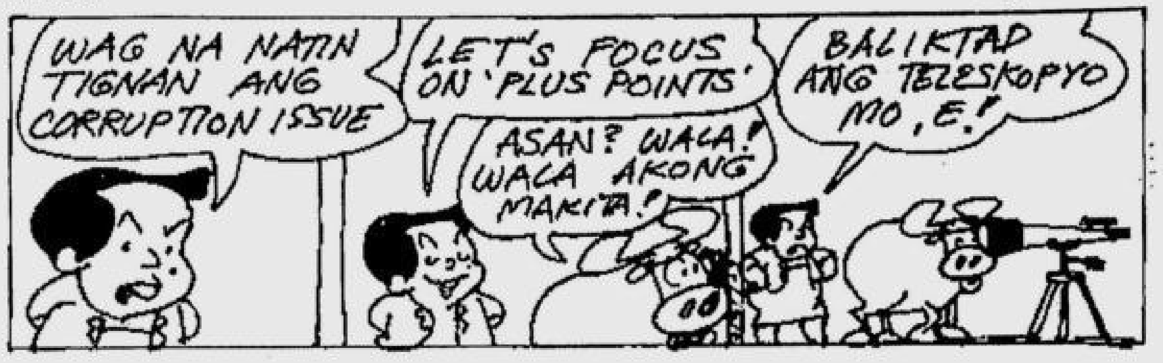
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


I GUESS THE PET SITTER WORKED OUT FINE, HUH?
OK, MAYBE NOT
JIM DAVIS 3-31

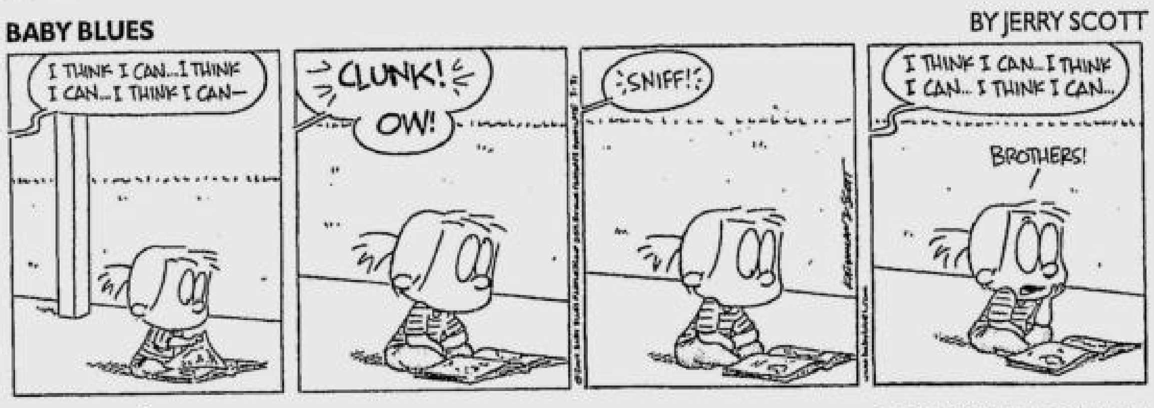
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WAG NA NATIN TIGNAN ANG CORRUPTION ISSUE
LET'S FOCUS ON 'PLUS POINTS'
ASAN? WALA! WALA AKONG MAKITA!
BALIKTAD ANG TELESKOPYO MO, E!

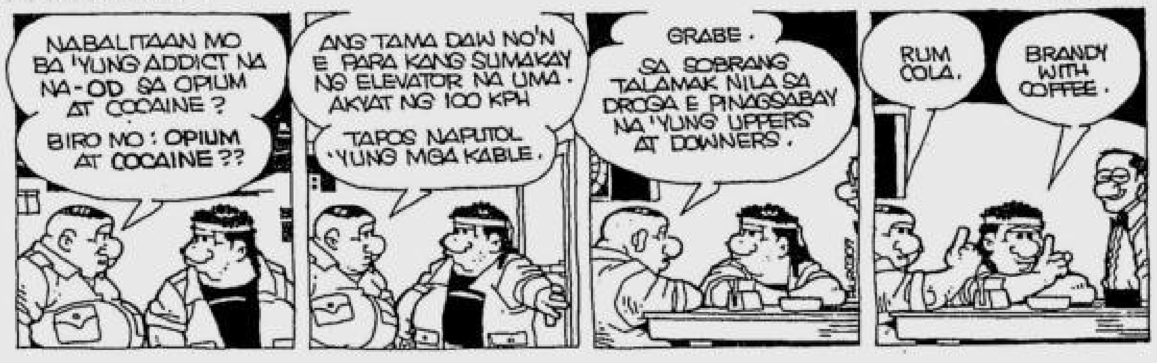
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


I THINK I CAN...I THINK I CAN...I THINK I CAN—
CLUNK!
OW!
SNIFF!
I THINK I CAN...I THINK I CAN...I THINK I CAN...
BROTHERS!

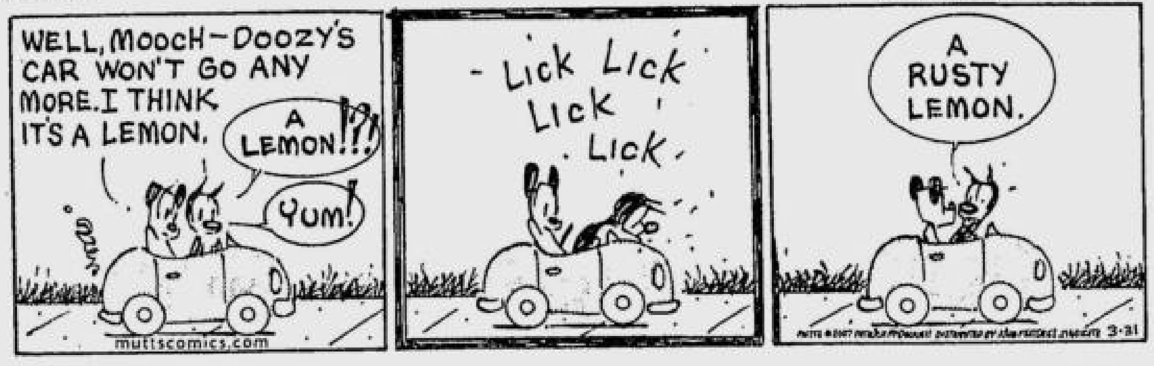
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


NABALITAAN MO BA 'YUNG ADDICT NA NA-OD SA OPIUM AT COCAINE?
BIRO MO: OPIUM AT COCAINE??
ANG TAMA DAW NO'N E PARA KANG SUMAKAY NG ELEVATOR NA UMA-AKYAT NG 100 KPH
TAPOS NAPUTOL 'YUNG MGA KABLE.
GRABE. SA SOBRANG TALAMAK NILA SA DROGA E PINAGSABAY NA 'YUNG UPPERS AT DOWNERS.
RUM COLA.
BRANDY WITH COFFEE.

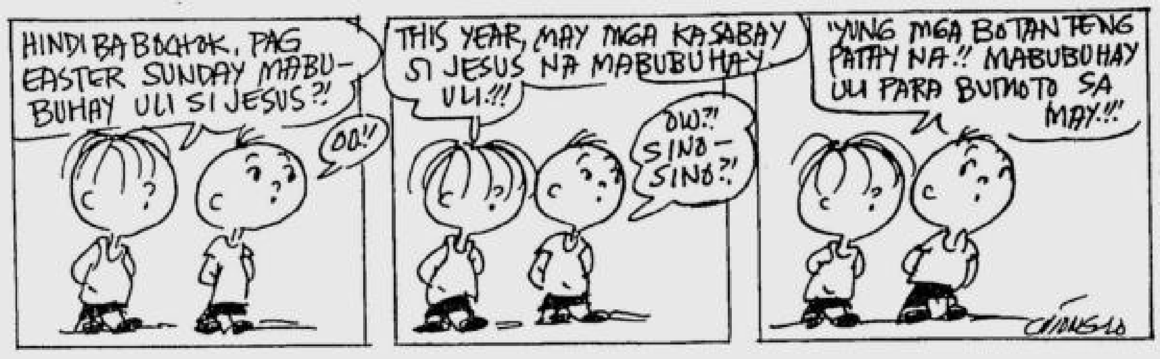
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


WELL, MOOCH—DOOZY'S CAR WON'T GO ANY MORE. I THINK IT'S A LEMON.
A LEMON!?!
YUM!
- Lick Lick Lick Lick
A RUSTY LEMON.
muttscomics.com
3-31

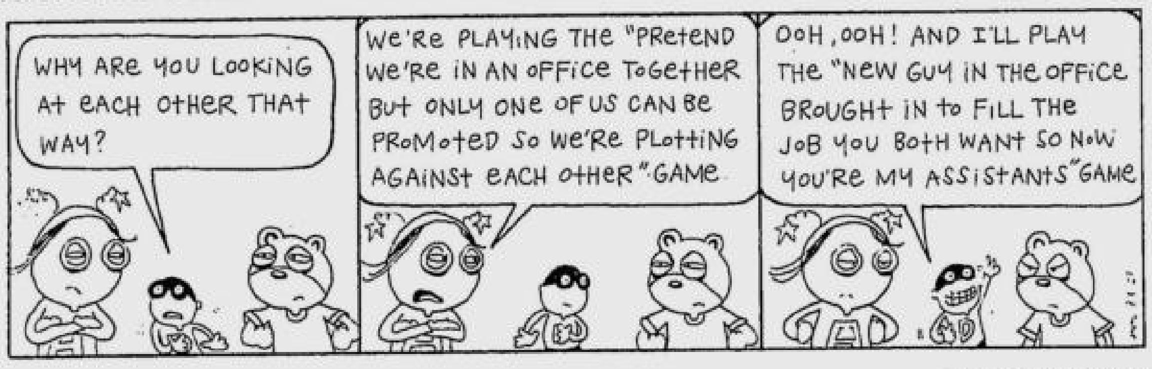
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI BA BOCHOK, PAG EASTER SUNDAY MABUBUHAY ULI SI JESUS?!
OO!!
THIS YEAR, MAY MGA KASABAY SI JESUS NA MABUBUHAY ULI!!!
OW?! SINO-SINO?!
'YUNG MGA BOTANTENG PATAY NA!! MABUBUHAY ULI PARA BUMOTO SA MAY!!!

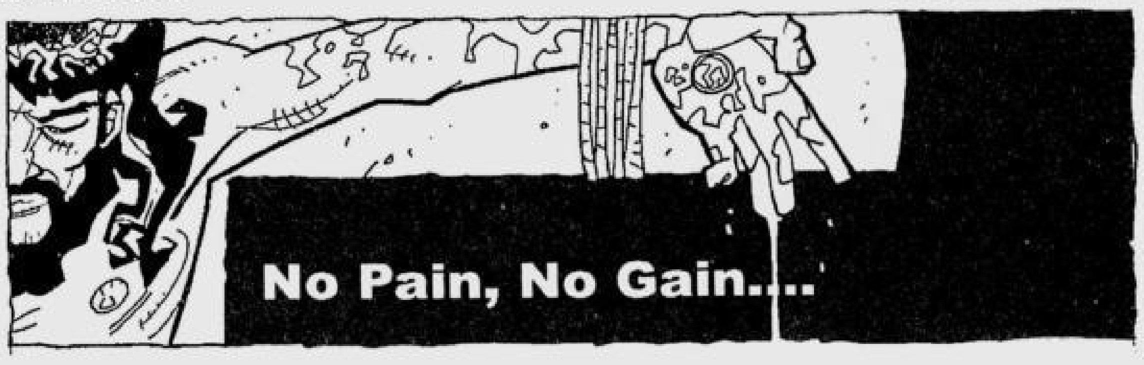
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT EACH OTHER THAT WAY?
WE'RE PLAYING THE "PRETEND WE'RE IN AN OFFICE TOGETHER BUT ONLY ONE OF US CAN BE PROMOTED SO WE'RE PLOTTING AGAINST EACH OTHER" GAME
OOH, OOH! AND I'LL PLAY THE "NEW GUY IN THE OFFICE BROUGHT IN TO FILL THE JOB YOU BOTH WANT SO NOW YOU'RE MY ASSISTANTS" GAME

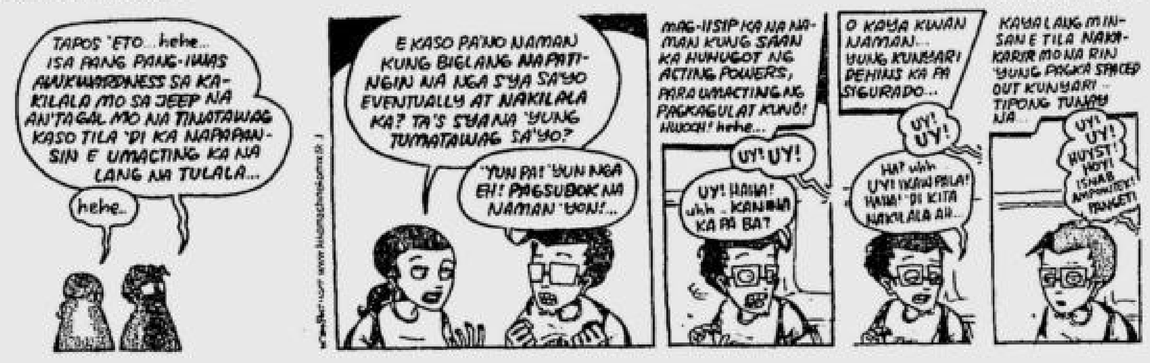
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


No Pain, No Gain....

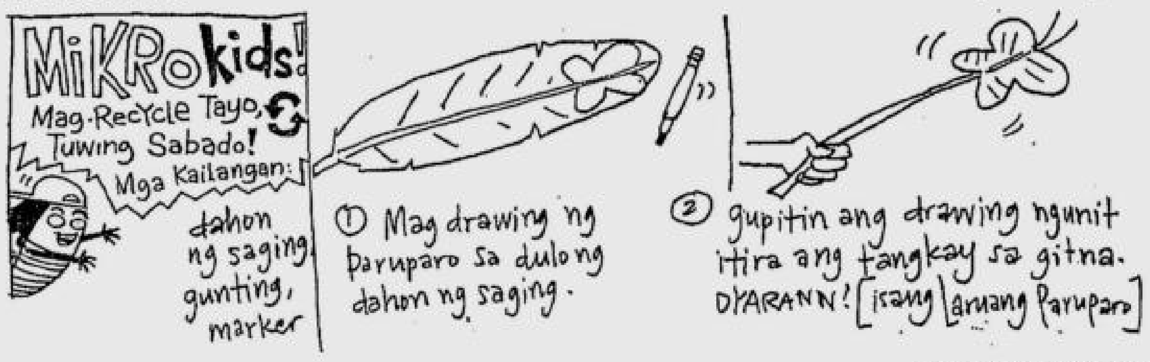
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


TAPOS 'ETO... hehe... ISA PANG PANG-IWAS AWKWARDNESS SA KAKILALA MO SA JEEP NA AN'TAGAL MO NA TINATAWAG KASO TILA 'DI KA NAPAPANSIN E UMACTING KA NA LANG NA TULALA...
hehe..
E KASO PA'NO NAMAN KUNG BIGLANG NAPATINGIN NA NGA S'YA SA'YO EVENTUALLY AT NAKILALA KA? TA'S SYA NA 'YUNG TUMATAWAG SA'YO?
'YUN PA! 'YUN NGA EH! PAGSUBOK NA NAMAN 'YON!...
MAG-IISIP KA NA NAMAN KUNG SAAN KA HUHUGOT NG ACTING POWERS, PARA UMACTING NG PAGKAGULAT KUNO! HUUOCH! hehe...
UY! UY!
UY! HAHA! uhh.. KANINA KA PA BA?
O KAYA KWAN NAMAN... YUNG KUNYARI DEHINS KA PA SIGURADO...
UY! UY!
HA! uhh UY! IKAW PALA! HAHA! 'DI KITA NAKILALA AH...
KAYA LANG MINSAN E TILA NAKAKARIR MO NA RIN 'YUNG PAGKA SPACED OUT KUNYARI... TIPONG TUNAY NA...
UY! UY! HUYST! HOY! ISNAB AMPANGET! PANGET!

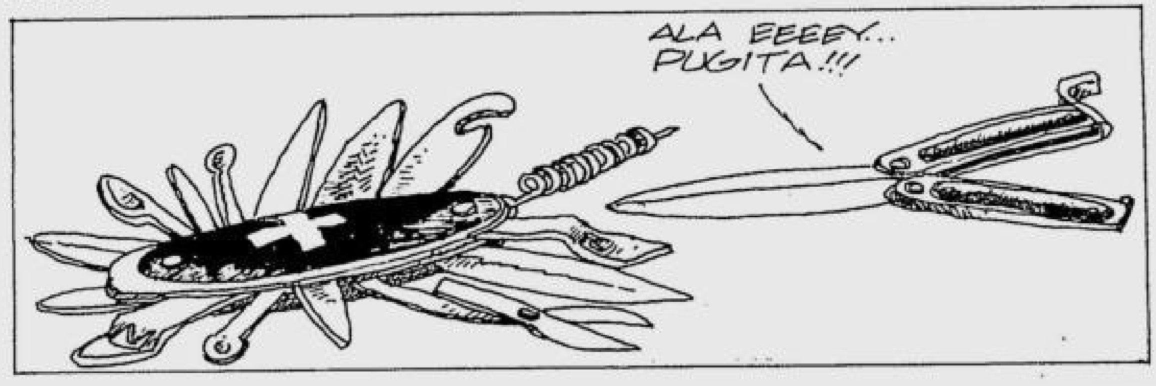
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MiKRoKids!
Mag-Recycle Tayo, Tuwing Sabado!
Mga Kailangan:
dahon ng saging, gunting, marker
① Mag drawing ng paruparo sa dulong dahon ng saging.
② gupitin ang drawing ngunit itira ang tangkay sa gitna.
DYARANN! [isang laruang paruparo]

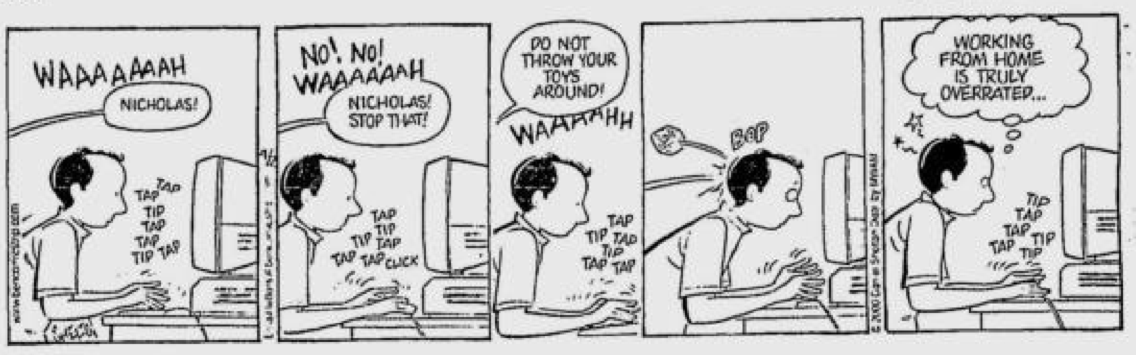
TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ALA EEEEY... PUGITA!!!

BEN

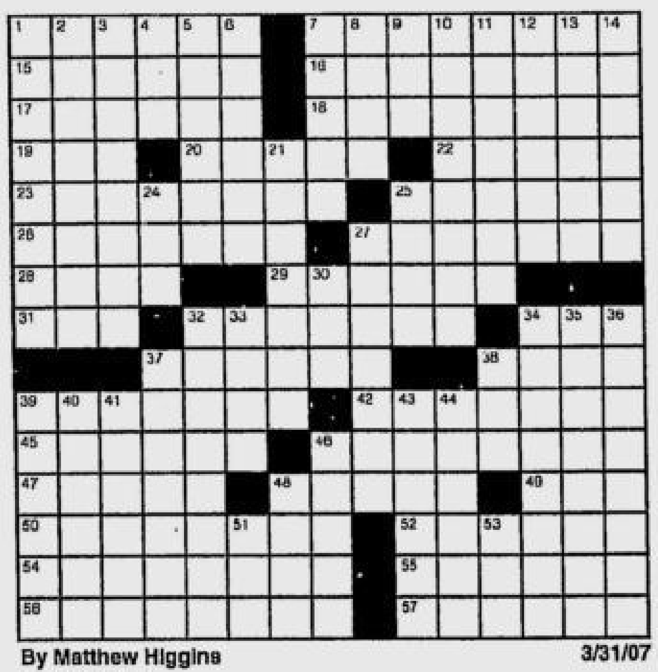
BY DANIEL SHELTON


WAAAAAAAH
NICHOLAS!
TAP TAP TIP TAP TAP TIP TAP
NO! NO! WAAAAAAH
NICHOLAS! STOP THAT!
TAP TIP TAP TIP TAP TAP CLICK
DO NOT THROW YOUR TOYS AROUND!
WAAAAHH
TAP TIP TAP TIP TAP TAP
BOP
WORKING FROM HOME IS TRULY OVERRATED...
TIP TAP TAP TIP TAP TIP

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Original
7 Finicky ones
15 Capital of Turkey
16 Baldness
17 Chewy, nutty confection
18 Nightclubs
19 "Shop __ You Drop"
20 Dutch painter Jan
22 Extremist sects
23 Features of desks, once
25 Do some cobbling
26 Manned the helm
27 Reproductive cells
28 Belgrade native
29 More spooky
31 Madison Ave. output
32 Writer Hesse
34 One of Noah's sons
37 Conscript for military service
38 Diner's card
39 In a remarkable way
42 Catholic clerics
45 "Falstaff" and "Otello"
46 Fin-walking fish
47 Sheer rayon fabric
48 Frozen rain
49 Mai __ cocktail
50 Scale showing the sun's declination
52 Tie up, as in surgery
54 Unstinting
55 Behaves theatrically
56 Alienate
57 Return to a former condition

DOWN
1 Decimal part of a logarithm
2 Consecrated with oil
3 Those lurking with sinister intent
4 Chasing game
5 Graphite eliminator
6 Discompose
7 Confronts
8 __-Ude, Russia
9 Whimper
10 Male astronauts
11 Bookstore shopper
12 Spotted wildcat
13 Ex-QB, Y.A. __
14 Gives lip to
21 Advanced in years
24 Spider's construction
25 Drizzle
27 Fight hand-to-hand
30 Grounded Aussie
32 Cuban dance
33 Building extensions
34 Pause
35 Long-tongued mammal
36 Most rumpled
37 Yuletide singer
38 Adult males
39 Period of immaturity
40 Expresses a viewpoint
41 Renter
43 Winding machine
44 Eventually
46 World-weary
48 Self-satisfied
51 Sun. follower
53 State's chief exec.



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH

3/31/07

Friday's Puzzle Solved

Y	O	G	I	■	K	A	M	A	■	P	R	O	V	E
A	K	I	N	■	A	D	A	S	■	R	E	V	E	L
M	A	N	D	M	B	O	Y	S	■	I	R	E	N	E
■	■	■	■	B	O	R	O	N	■	M	A	R	I	N
T	H	E	B	A	B	E	■	■	S	A	N	D	R	A
W	A	L	L	■	■	E	T	R	E	■	G	O	E	S
I	S	L	A	N	D	■	A	U	R	A	■	■	■	■
T	H	E	B	R	O	N	X	B	O	M	B	E	R	S
■	■	■	■	C	U	R	E	■	W	A	I	T	U	P
A	S	P	S	■	B	A	D	E	■	■	R	A	S	A
P	A	L	E	S	T	■	■	S	C	O	O	T	E	R
P	H	O	N	O	■	A	C	T	O	R	■	■	■	■
L	A	V	E	R	■	M	R	O	C	T	O	B	E	R
E	R	E	C	T	■	P	E	P	O	■	C	U	T	E
S	A	R	A	S	■	S	E	S	S	■	A	R	O	D

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3/31/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have principles and ideals, and you're very tenacious about defending them. You're not a quitter, but you're pragmatic and realistic. You're very comfortable in any leadership role. You know what you want to achieve on your own and through the efforts of others. You express yourself well. You will learn something valuable in the year ahead.

Birthdate of: Ewan McGregor, actor; Gordie Howe, hockey player; Al Gore, politician/activist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be on the lookout for new ways of boosting your income or earning money. You also might want to buy something unusual, especially pieces of modern art, electronics or technology.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good day to shop for wardrobe items. You might buy something quite different from what you would normally wear. You're in the mood to experiment!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Bright ideas seem to occur to you now as if from out of the ether. Others might think you're quite brilliant. (Or not!) You have the ability to see new ways of doing things today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Perhaps a friend will surprise you today. If this doesn't happen, you just might meet someone who is a real character or quite bizarre.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Bosses, VIPs and parents might surprise you today. Alternatively, you might receive unexpected praise or honors. Something catches you off-guard.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Act very quickly if you have an opportunity to travel or take some kind of educational course. This little gift will have a very short window. Move quickly!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Surprise gifts and goodies can come your way. Some of you might get the green light for a loan or mortgage.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Partners and friends will delight you with unusual antics or surprise moves. You might be attracted to someone entirely new who excites you.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): New improvements to your job could make a pleasant difference. Be open to what's taking place. Opportunities will arise and disappear very quickly.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Love at first sight can happen for some of you today. Something surprising connected with romance, sports, children and the arts will definitely take place.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might buy something unusual for your home today. Or perhaps your little domestic surprise is unexpected guests dropping by.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Expect to meet new acquaintances today. Conversations with others will be memorable. People feel quite bold and experimental now. Do something that's different and out of the ordinary. Make today an adventure!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

by Dave Green

	8		5					6
7				6			3	
9				7				
	4		2					
		7				6		
					3		7	
				3				8
	1			8				2
2					4		9	

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/31

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	6	5	9	3	8	4	7	2
8	3	7	1	4	2	5	9	6
9	2	4	6	5	7	8	3	1
3	5	9	8	1	6	2	4	7
7	4	1	5	2	3	9	6	8
6	8	2	4	7	9	3	1	5
4	1	3	2	6	5	7	8	9
5	9	6	7	8	4	1	2	3
2	7	8	3	9	1	6	5	4

Difficulty Level ★★★★

3/30

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LOPEZ. Returns to her Latin roots.

J-Lo waxes first Spanish language collection

PARIS—JENNIFER LOPEZ' FIRST SPANish language album, "Como ama una mujer" (How a woman loves), is a "return to my Latin roots," the singer said in Paris ahead of the album's worldwide release recently.

"I've always sung in Spanish, so it was natural to record in this language," explained the 37-year-old Lopez. "I grew up with the different types of music my mother listened to," said Lopez, who is of Puerto Rican origin but was born and raised in the Bronx.

Sixth album

Lopez, in white platform shoes and hanging onto husband Marc Anthony's arm, flew into Paris for a news conference prior to the release of her sixth album.

The collection is produced by Colombian Julio Reyes and Anthony, whom she married in 2004. "We had lots of fun working together---that's how we met 10 years ago, and we both respect each other's work," she revealed.

Next on her schedule: A new album in English, a European promo tour for the album later this year, and a film with Antonio Banderas about the murder of Mexican workers in the border town of Juarez. *AFP*

ABBA. Timeless tunes.

Brosnan, Streep team up in movie version of Abba musical

LOS ANGELES—PIERCE BROSNAN has become the latest star to sign up for the big-screen adaptation of the hit Abba musical, "Mamma Mia!," local media reported recently.

The Irish actor, best known for his portrayal of British super spy 007 in the James Bond films, will appear opposite Meryl Streep, Daily Variety reported.

Identity

The film, which plays out to a soundtrack of hit songs from the popular Swedish group of the 1970s and 1980s, tells the story of a young woman trying to find out about the identity of her father.

Brosnan, who will play one of the men summoned to a Greek island by the woman, told Variety he had leapt at the chance to star alongside Streep, with whom he is set to perform a duet. "I said 'yes' right away, because it meant working with Meryl," Brosnan explained.

STREEP AND BROSNAN. Go the musical route in big-screen version of "Mamma Mia!"

Joyful

"I saw the show with my family in London, and found it wonderfully happy and joyful. What a kick in the pants to be able to go off and spend time with Meryl on some Greek island singing Abba songs!"

Since its opening in London in 1999, "Mamma Mia!" has grossed more than $2 billion in worldwide ticket sales, making it one of the most successful musicals of all time. *AFP*

TAKE THAT MUSICAL HITS BRITISH STAGE

LONDON—A MUSICAL FEATURing the songs of British boy band Take That is set to hit London's West End, its producer said recently.

"Never Forget," described as a fictional, feel-good comedy about a Take That tribute band, features their hit songs including "Back for Good" and "Relight My Fire."

Highly successful

Producer Tristan Baker compared the show, which will play in Cardiff, Glasgow, Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent and Edinburgh later this year before coming to London, to the highly successful Abba musical, "Mamma Mia!"

TAKE THAT. Their hit songs will grace the West End.

"We are the biggest fans of Take That's music, and we are excited about the wonderful opportunity to create a new musical based on the group's fantastic catalogue," he added.

Take That sold 19 million records in the 1990s and have had 10 British No. 1 hit singles. They split in 1996 but reunited 10 years later without founding member Robbie Williams, who has since become one of the biggest solo male artists in the world. *AFP*

MARTINEZ. Beat 5,000 aspirants to become the model of J. Lo's clothing line.

New talents gear up for stardom

From page K1

Also coming on strong in the music world is Cascada. Born Natalie Horler, she's British but is currently based in Germany, and has achieved success in the US and other musical territories in the world.

Her album, "Everytime We Touch," has sold over a million copies worldwide, and has spawned the hit single, "Truly Madly Deeply." The album has 12 other songs including "Ready for Love," "Neverending Dream," "One More Night," "Another You" and "Miracle."

Meanwhile, Star World's new series, "Fashion House," has attracted a lot of attention, not just with its spicy plotlines, but also with its great-looking and charismatic cast of relative newcomers.

Important roles

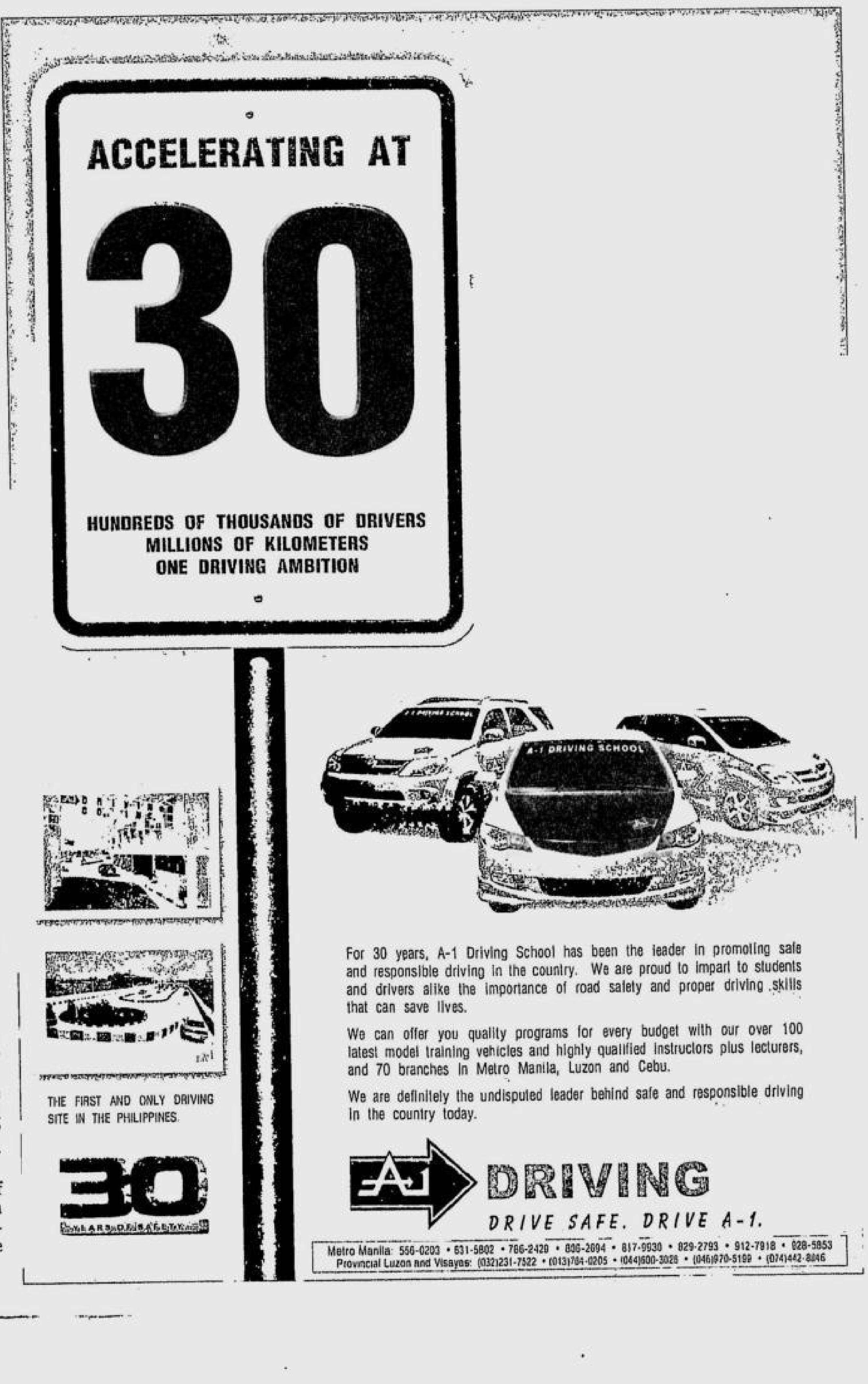
The series topbills veteran Bo Derek, but it also fields fresh and promising talents in important roles. Catch them on Star World weekdays at 10 p.m.

Cuban beauty Natalie Martinez plays Michelle, an aspiring designer. She first gained attention by beating 5,000 aspiring lookers to become the model of J.Lo's clothing line.

Donna Foldman sizzles as the temptress, Gloria. Her exotic looks have been featured in the music videos of Justin Timberlake, Sugar Ray and Dwight Yoakam.

Joel Berti is cast as the malicious William Chandler. He's starred as Michael Landon Jr. in "The Michael Landon Story" and as Alan Osmond in "Inside the Osmonds."

And Taylor Kinney is Luke, the artist son of Maria Gianni (Bo Derek). Discovered in Hawaii, Kinnie will next be seen with Dominique Swain and Tom Sizemore in the indie movies, "The Furnace" and "White Air."



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Is Taylor Hicks the first 'Idol' fluke?

NEW YORK—"AMERICAN IDOL" winner Taylor Hicks needs his Soul Patrol to step up. They were certainly there for him around this time last year, when he was building up a feverish fan base, named the "Soul Patrol."

Title

The things about him that irked Simon Cowell—that mop of gray hair and the herky-jerky dance moves that conjured up images of dorky dads loose at a wedding reception—were instead embraced by millions, who later handed him the "Idol" title over the likes of talented hotties, Katharine McPhee and Chris Daughtry.

It was like a made-for-primetime fairy tale, starring the soulful-voiced Hicks. But, as all that hoopla died down, Hicks faced a tougher task: Making the transition from reality TV star to established soul singer.

So far, not so good—well, not Carrie Underwood "good." His self-titled, post-"Idol" album, released last December, debuted at No. 2 on the charts. While it has sold a respectable 640,000 copies, it has slid significantly to a dismal rank: 136 last week!

Discs by previous winners Underwood, Kelly Clarkson, Fantasia and Ruben Studdard performed a lot better in the weeks after they were issued. And finalist Chris Daughtry is near the top of the charts with the debut of his band, Daughtry—the boys have sold over 1 million records!

Geoff Mayfield, a senior analyst at Billboard, said he's got "a strong suspicion that Hicks might be the first winner who falls shy of a million units." There's a reason for that, said Tom Corson, executive vice president of J Records, a label within Sony-BMG, which signs the show's singers:

First single

Hicks took longer than some of the other Idols to complete the album, he said, and his first single, "Just To Feel That Way," debuted on radio's airwaves only three weeks ago.

"It's a work in progress. Would we have liked to sell more records? Yes. But, the album is still gold and is on its way to the platinum mark," Corson told the Associated Press this week. "And, if the single performs, we'll turn it around, so we're quite optimistic about things as they stand right now."

The power ballad, "Just to Feel That Way," in which he urges a lover to try to make the relationship work, sits at No. 26 on the adult contemporary radio charts, Mayfield said.

HICKS. His Soul Patrol needs to get cracking.

"With Taylor, you're going into an adult format," Corson explained. "We hope it translates younger, but his music right now is much more adult. It's a longer burn—and a longer process!"

Hicks' target audience is more passive, said Corson, who noted that "it takes a little longer to get those people to buy." And Hicks, who is out on a nationwide tour to promote the album, has a plan to boost sales.

Overnight success

"Slow and steady wins the race," he said recently. "To have overnight success is tough to do. You have to massage the record-buying audience as much as you have to massage the live performing audience."

So, Hicks is going to take a grassroots approach. "The best thing for me as an artist is to get out, be with other people, and tour the record," he added. "And, go to the radio stations and be personable."

Is the Soul Patrol, whose members proudly brandished "Pick Hicks" signs on "Idol" last year, still going strong? "It's been a packed house every night," recalled Hicks. "It's a musical show—very real and raw. And that's who I am as an artist."

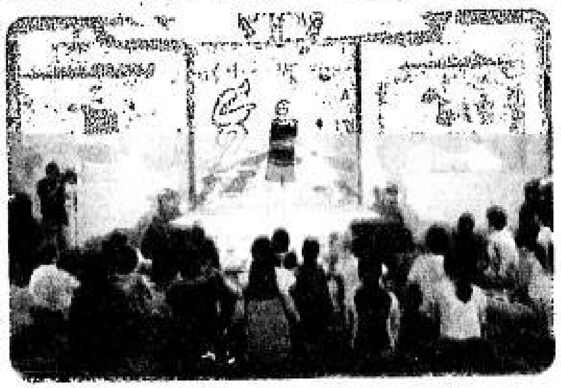
Hicks, who has studied the stage moves of passionate, soulful performers like James Brown and Sly Stone, could have a better shot at success in front of a live audience than on the radio, said Mayfield.

Impact

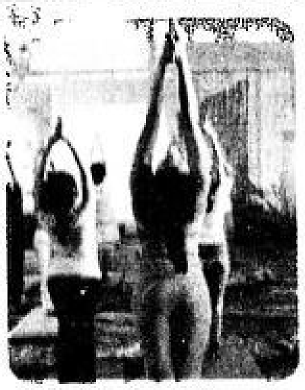
One thing is certain, though: The guy needs a radio hit if he wants to make an impact on major markets, observed Sharon Dastur, a program director at the New York-based radio station, Z100, which plays Top 40 songs. His chances for that are hampered by the album's classic-rock feel.

It's too early to tell how things might end up, reasoned Hicks. But, in the mean time, he's happy to be onstage. And he's thankful for that moment on "American Idol"—an undeniably successful launching pad.

AP


Jason Ewing introduces Bikram Yoga

Easing into the asanas with Bikram breathing


The first position

Corey Wills stretches up

Yoga instructor Pye Trinidad in the full locust pose

Half-moon asana

Perfect bow pose

C2 live Life Series: Yoga Awakenings

with Jason Ewing

Model Phoemela Baranda is a Bikram yoga enthusiast

It's all about you and your choice of a healthier, more natural way of life. This was the message that C2 Green Tea, yoga instructors, and celebrity practitioners made during Yoga Awakenings, the launch event of the C2 Live Life series. By bringing in Jason Ewing, internationally renowned Bikram Yoga instructor to the stars, C2's Yoga Awakenings let first-timers and enthusiasts alike feel the difference that yoga and natural green tea can make.

"It's not about what you can't do, but what you can do, right now, this second," challenged Ewing, as he prepared to teach his class at the Rockwell Tent. The venue was turned into a serene setting awash in green and white, with a water fountain entrance, bamboo accents, plush seats, the scent of mint in the air, and ambient music by Couchlab. "My goal for you today is to feel great," he added.

No air-conditioning was used, as participants, which included some of today's fittest personalities, laid down their mats and learned to breathe the Bikram Yoga way, to simulate Ewing's heated yoga studio in Atlanta, Georgia. In Bikram Yoga practice, heat helps soothe and prime the muscles to move more efficiently without forced exertions.

"Just let yourself relax and be in the room," Ewing reminded them. "Let the heat be a tool for a much better experience." His advice to Bikram Yoga beginners: be well-hydrated, wear comfortable clothes, and listen to what their bodies tell them to do.

According to C2 Brand Manager Carlo de la Paz, C2 Green Tea chose yoga because it is about being able to relax to have the power and energy to go through the day. Likewise, Yoga's view on well-being is similar to C2's goals of promoting a more holistic approach to a wellness lifestyle, incorporating elements that are good for the mind, body and spirit . C2 offers the many health benefits of brewed natural green tea leaves, supporting one's desire in achieving a lifestyle dedicated to his total well-being.

"After taking this first step, we hope that people will continue to look for other ways to wellness and live a healthy lifestyle, and determine which suits them best and stick to it," shared Anna Tiongson, C2 Assistant Brand Manager. After Yoga Awakenings, C2 will hold more events to raise awareness on other alternative and accessible forms of fitness for total wellness.

"It is heartening to see more and more people taking an interest in yoga," said local Bikram Yoga instructor Pye Trinidad. "What it promises is very real and can be enjoyed by all. It is about time we took better care of ourselves: mind, body, and spirit."

Bubbly event host Sam Oh commended the beginners, "It must have been tough taking the class for the first time, with all the spectators and cameras around!"

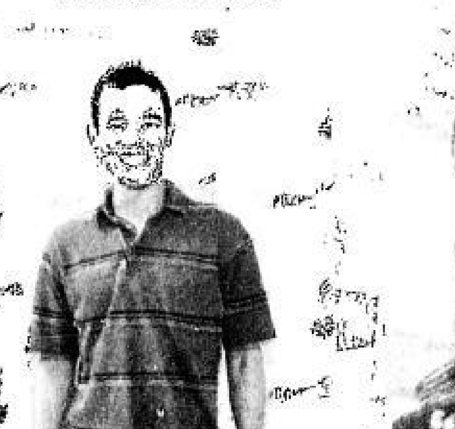
C2 Live Life series makes healthy living available to more people through free-for-all activities that bring together different wellness lifestyle options with the benefits of green tea. Watch out for other C2 Live Life events to learn how to live a healthier, more holistic lifestyle, naturally.

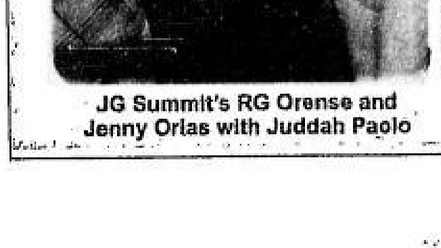
Internationally renowned Bikram Yoga instructor Jason Ewing

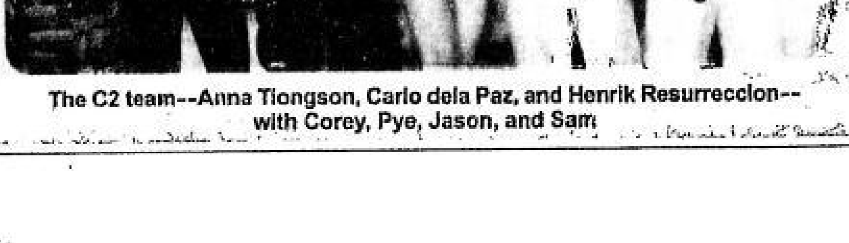
Juddah Paolo and Rico Robles

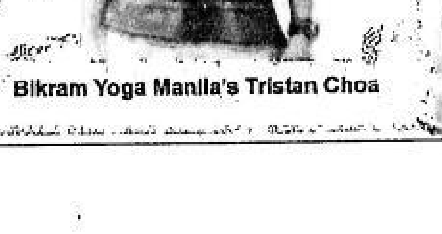
C2 Yoga Awakenings host Sam Oh gangs up with the promo girls

Pye, Jason, and Sam discuss the finer points of Bikram Yoga


Jason takes a break


JG Summit's RG Orense and Jenny Orias with Juddah Paolo


The C2 team--Anna Tiongson, Carlo dela Paz, and Henrik Resurreccion--with Corey, Pye, Jason, and Sam


Bikram Yoga Manila's Tristan Choa

Cautionary lessons from stars' behavior

By Lilia Borlongan-Alvarez

WHAT SHOULD THE viewing public expect from movie and TV celebrities? Aside from turning in sterling performances, should they be expected to be good role models, too?

A tall order, indeed. But these days, it seems that the star-struck among us would rather have their idols wash their dirty linen in public than keep their private lives to themselves. (Gone are the days when *delicadeza* and shame were the rule rather than the exception.)

In this age, when media has turned into a double-edged weapon, the more our stars brag about their scandalous affairs—and the longer they engage in mudslinging—the better subjects they make for primetime news.

Greatest gift

We're not prudish, but listen to these quotable quotes from some of our media personalities: "It happens to the best of families. My dad has 'love children.' What's important is we're good parents to our kids—whether legit or not," says a movie personality turned columnist. (Hasn't she heard the saying that the greatest gift that a father can give to his children is to love their mother and be faithful to her?)

"Reality TV star Nicole Richie was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs, two months after she was arrested for driving the wrong way on a Los Angeles freeway." (No thanks, she thought, for being Lionel Richie's daughter—born with a silver spoon in her mouth. She'd rather go the Paris Hilton way.)

Relationship

"We're never getting married, but we're never getting divorced—which is fantastic," said Jim Carrey of his relationship with Jenny McCarthy. Asked if he would get her at least a ring, he said, "I bought her a Chloe purse. Isn't that good enough?" Well, thanks for small favors—and so much for marriage as a sacred institution.!

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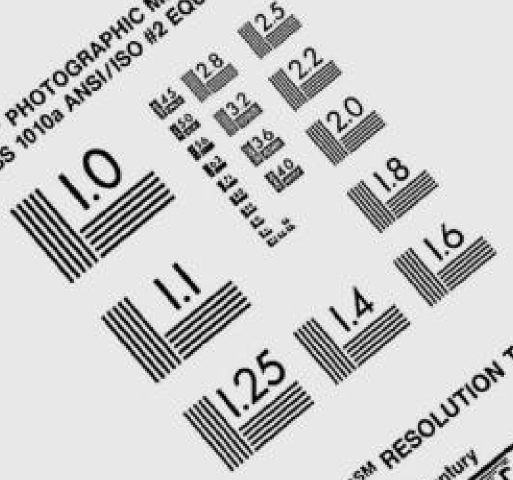

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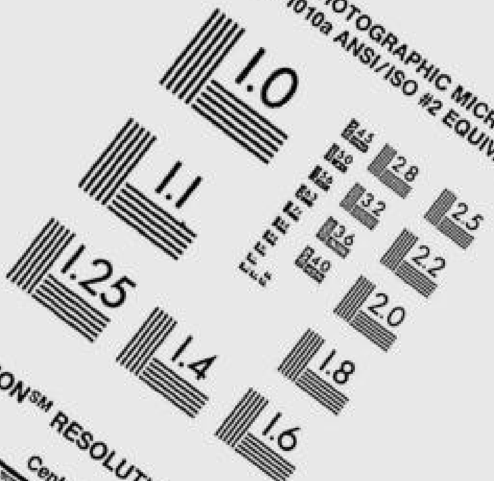

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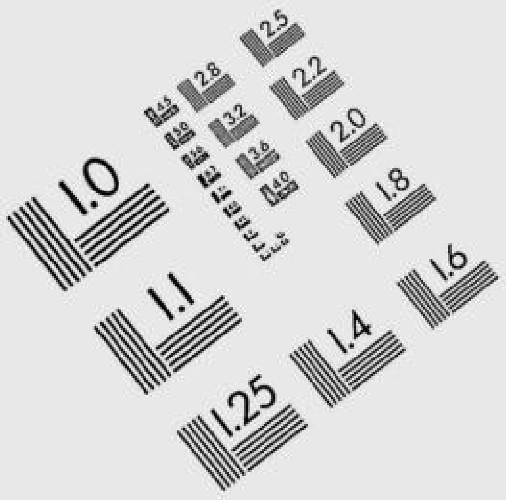

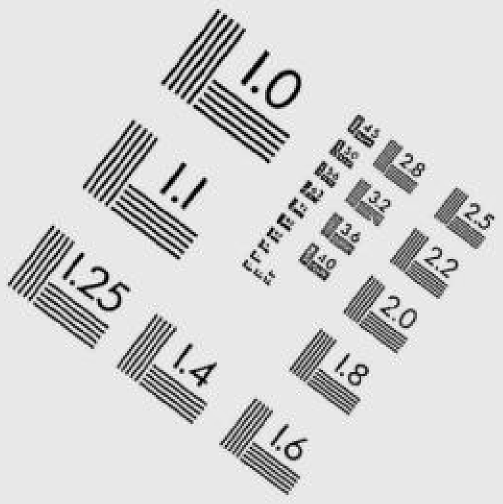

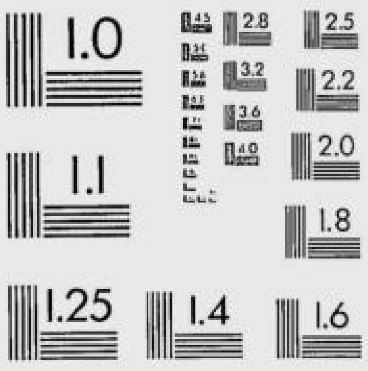

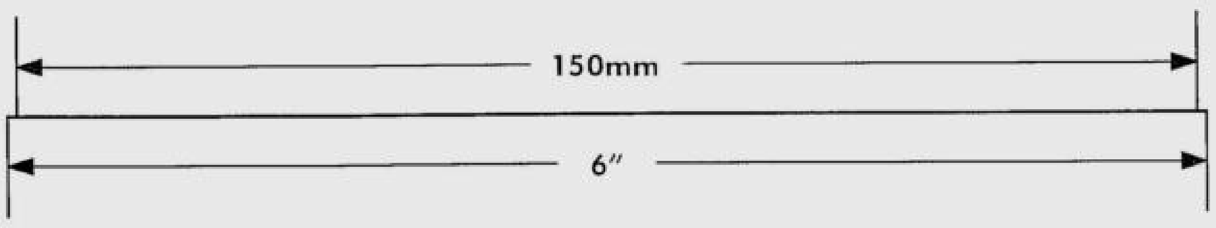

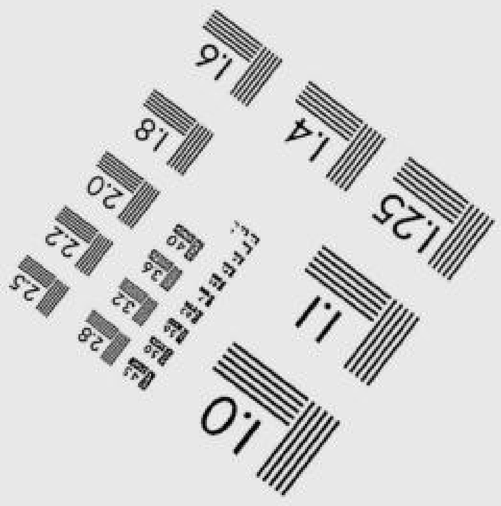

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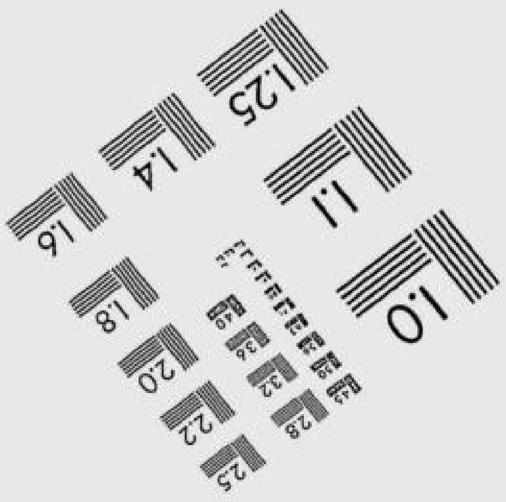

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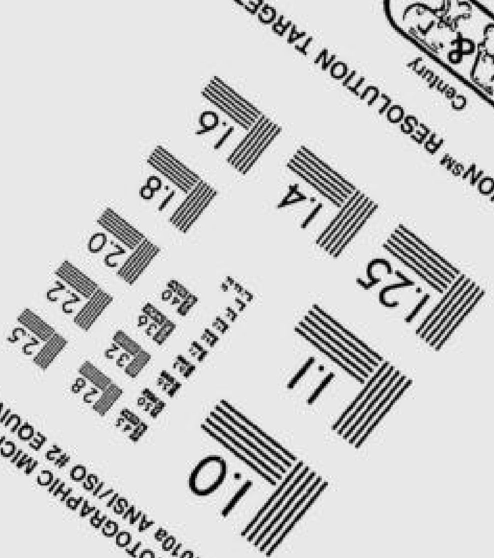

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

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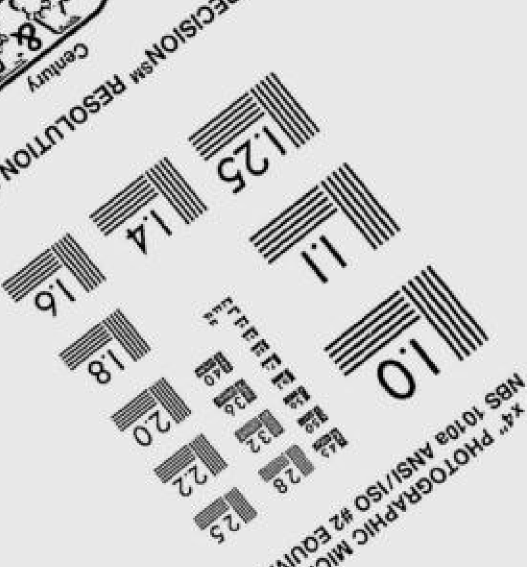

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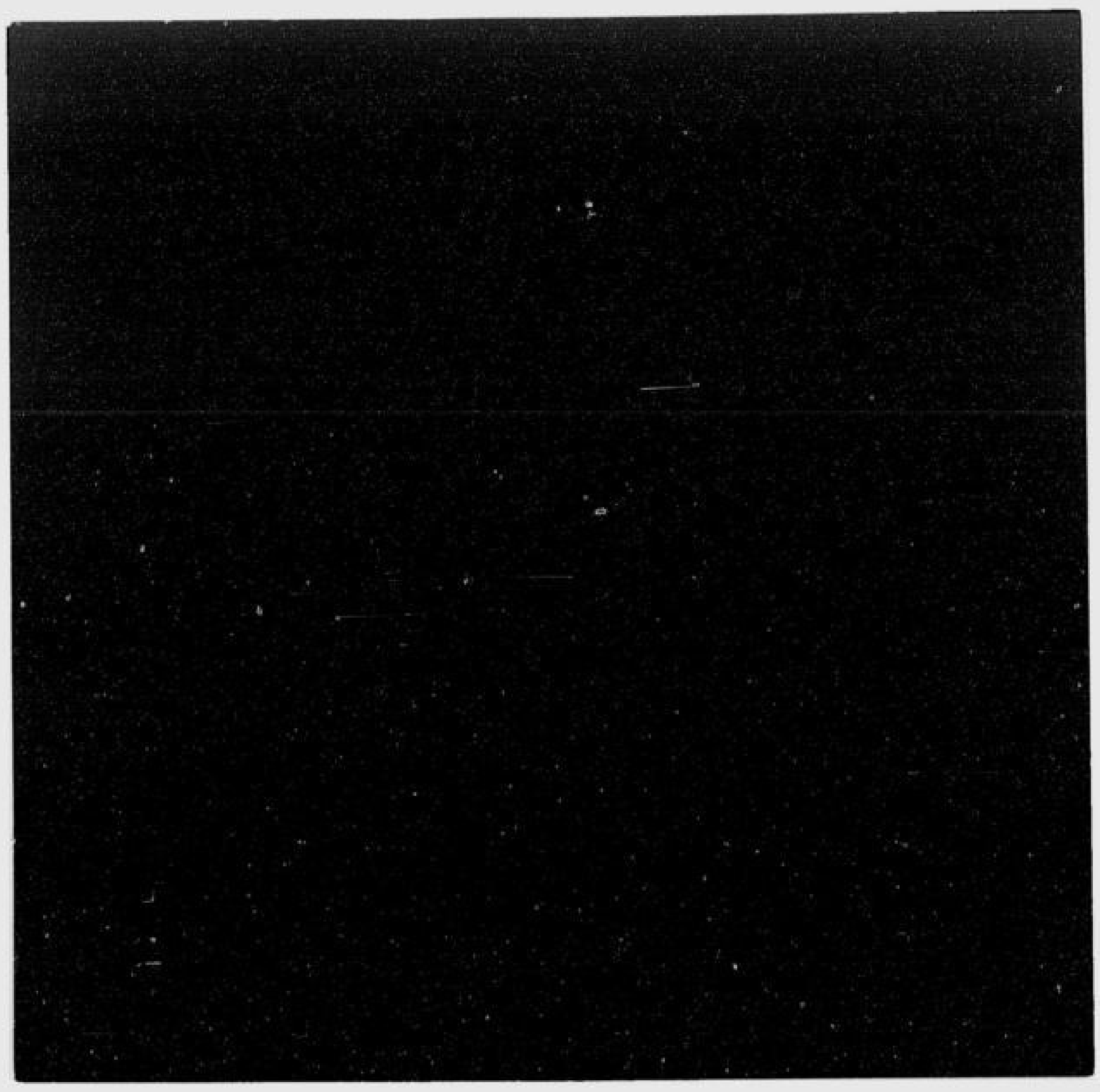

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